

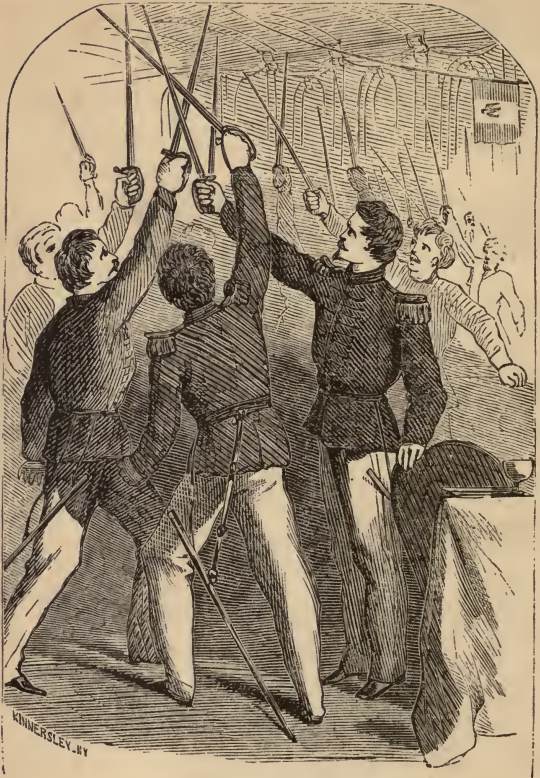
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“ We swear to wage,
Thro’ smoke and fire, victorious war until
We’re from our shameful bondage loosed, and peace
And freedom are, throughout the land, declared
Once more.”—PAGE 88.

THE
MEXICAN;

OR,
LOVE AND LAND.

FOUNDED ON THE INVASION OF MAXIMILIAN.

BY JOHN M. ^{alone} DAGNALL,
AUTHOR OF "DAISY SWAIN."

1818-19

"An honest tale speeds best being plainly told."—SHAKESPEARE.

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CHAPTER I.

ONE day, amid the fervid gleam of noon,
In coolness basking on a breezy shore,
A Mexican, in pensive mood, was seen.

Idly loitering where the sea-foam fring'd
A sandy girdle of Sonora's strand.

There, at times responsive to the ocean dirge,
His bosom heaved a sigh, and wildly strange
His numbers with the waves alone he held
In soft communion sweet. "How gleeful, wild,
How solemn, yet how glad, they murmur out,
Upon these glitt'ring sands they love so well,
A welcome fond to me, as if I were
To be thro' life endear'd to them!

"Ah, here,"

He sigh'd, "upon this sea-beat shore, amid
The orient hues of morn, and, late at eve,
Beneath the starry gleam of moonless skies,
I often, when a beardless boy, have whiled
My youthful hours away, enraptured with
Thy surge, wild wave, as thou upon these sands
From out the swelling tide wouldst fretful rush
My careless feet to lave. But ne'er have I

So much in all my sea-side rambles felt
Thy fond complaint, dear wave, my bosom move
With a desire to brave the stormy main
That gave thee birth."

Then out he look'd with eye
Of rapture, far across the sounding sea,
Verging on the sky,—heaven's source divine,
The blissful zone of those from sin redeem'd,—
Where he a prospect saw there for *his* soul,
If on this grand and mighty globe he'd seek
The righteous means for its salvation :
Religion, purest treasure of the soul :
Benevolence, prompt of means and love unto
The needful of his kind mid squalid scenes
Of suffering, want, and woe.

Oh, wherefore, then,
Ye sordid sons, to earthly forms attend,
Neglectful of the end and aims of Him
Who died upon the holy Mount, the souls
Of fallen man to save ?

Our hero was
A righteous man, a man of holy views;
Sinless of conscience, sincere in creed;
And dared defiantly, before bold men
With war's dread schemes familiar, stand
And bring to view the wrongs his bleeding land
Endured; what burdens then opprest; what ills
In evil hour his race afflict; how then
Their hands and hearts in Freedom's cause were
 join'd,
Nor fearing death for her sweet sake,—for he who
Falls for Liberty fills a martyr's grave:
His soul heroic mounts to the blest goal
Of light and peace.

So there upon the beach
He stood and gazed the liquid scene around,
Feeling his country would the battle storm
Outride, as doth the well-mann'd bark upon
The plunging wave the gale that drives her on:
Hoping too, the wind would at no distant day

Him proudly waft across the wrinkling main,
Rolling there, in briny folds before his view,
The future scene of his ambitious course,
Where noble deeds, some day, he would achieve ;
For in the pious fervor of his heart
He felt his soul was great, and that he could
Not but do well when for the right contending.

“ Yes, yes,” he cried, “ ’tis true, alas ! O fate !
Too true ; a tyrant mocks thy storms, fond main !
For on thy misty bosom, bounding near
These shores, and dark’ning yonder sun’s bright
track,

There speeds a bold usurper’s ship of war,
By steam ’gainst wind and tide of earth propell’d.

“ O my poor country ! once so fair and free !
In former times thy days so full of joy !
All then was bright as gleams diffusive flung
From golden suns on streamlet, hill, and plain ;

But now, alas ! ere Freedom fair hath mark'd
An era in thy reign, thy summer days
Are clouded in the palling smoke of war.
In times long past she blest these realms so fair—
Realms bravely won by our dead sires, who then,
As like huge rocks, in all their might and strength
Withstood the stern encounter of their foes,
And fell'd them down, at last, upon the field
Of strife, all shot and mangled unto death.
Then Freedom from her thrall'dom vile came forth,
And blest the land that gave her birth. But now,
Alas ! dear friend of the opprest, thou'rt down
In gloom again, with tyrant chains enslaved,
Thy laws o'erthrown by an invading foe.

“But soft ; while in this mood, I'll ask myself
What freedom is. Is freedom but a name ?
Is that name, like virtue to bold men, a myth,
Or thing too frail to last, when lust and power—
Twin tyrants bold—the human race enslave ?

Hath Republics but a life's uncertain date?
Shall tyrant sway yet be the form to rule
The earth's vast multitudes of men? It hath
 been so
For ages past; and monarchs in their pride
Yet boast that they, until the sun's last gleam
Upon this earth doth shine, shall rule the world:
E'en make, thro' war, an empire of this land,
So they in royal lands may concentrate
All Mexico's vast wealth, and circumscribe
Man's freedom here as they do now in their
Despotic climes remote. Will they, forsooth!
They count without the cost; we'll see to that,
And teach the tool of France that Mexicans
Can not be brought low grov'ling to the earth,
Like loathsome snakes abhorr'd, to be trod
On by dull, unfeeling kings. Know ye not
A patriot's right and power it is to teach
Vain tyrants how to rule the race of men
They would enslave with laws unjust? for bear

It well in mind, O thou presumptuous thing !
In tranquil times thy tongue with arrogance
May boast of kingly power ; but when the people
Rise with sword in hand, to speak of wrongs
Endured, how soon the royal coward skulks
Away dismay'd in other climes to dwell !”

“ O then, thou prideful man of worldly pomp,
Now learn from me how far above thee is
The patriot noble, great. ’Tis nature’s sons
Wear noble titles,—honor, truth, and worth,—
For love of country opens up their hearts
To every caste, condition, sect, and creed.
Of men, that makes *them* great ; and I who feel,
As here upon my native shore I stand,
Fair nature’s nobleness within my soul,
I raise my voice and say, ‘ Thank God, Rafael,
That thou art Mexico’s true citizen,
Commissioned by the great Godhead to hurl
Swift vengeance on thy country’s foes, if’t be

The will of fate that I shall undertake
The task to marshal forth my countrymen,
On land or sea, to meet the daring foe.’”

Then o’er the scene there came a change.
Dark’ning

On his view, in awful grandeur looming
Southward, great black clouds in dense folds
billow’d

All the vast horizon. A gloom the sea’s
Bright features spread. From mount and rill
the sun

Its radiant gleams withdrew, then sunk down pale
Behind the dusky mass fast thund’ring on,
In elemental strife.

“Hark!” the patriot cried,
“Heaven hath ceased to slumber. In yonder cloud
God’s vengeful spirit flies with tenfold force
Toward these shores. Again His mighty wrath
I hear in that dread crash. It warns me hence,

And tells me that my time I idly waste
Upon this strand. Therefore, obedient to
The Will Divine, I'll here no longer stay."

Then Rafael took his eyes from off the brine,
And march'd along the sandy shore, until
A cliff he reach'd. With supple limbs he climb'd
The steep ascent, then turn'd his eyes above
And saw the thunder-cloud about to burst
With rain. So nimbly thrice three furlongs'
lengths

He wander'd where a time-worn castle stood :
In olden times, tradition states, the seat
Of Aztec kings ; and then beneath an arch
Of its old battlements, where bristled once
In all their warlike trim, huge antique darts
Of war, rude lance and spear, Rafael there
sought

Shelter from the storm : fit spot to meditate
Alone.

There safely from the drenching rain
Inroof'd the patriot sat, revolving still
Within his mind the fate of Mexico :
Of tyrant force and lawless power complain'd ;
What errors of almighty fate had brought
His country then so low down in the scale
Of nations ; how her rights and laws were lost,
Her freedom gone ; and how her patriots then
Were thrust in dungeons of eternal shame :
There yoked in chains on foreign anvils forged
In firm, united links by ruthless hands
Of bold invaders who then roam'd her plains,
To pillage, burn, and devastate the land.

Now mark what daring inspiration wakes
The man ! See how his eyes are by the beam
Of courage fired ! Both revenge and glory
Agitate his breast. True-hearted man, be thine
The power ; thou hast the will and spirit bold
To win the wreath that crowns the victor's brow,

Fair recompense that merit earns among
The bravest and the best. For then he felt
He war could wage, or still in tempests live,
Danger scorn upon the waste of waters,
When the winds of ocean free shall waft him
Where adventure leads, to fame and conquest,
'Gainst his foes upon the sea. Rafael brave
For such a task was nobly fit by birth;
For taintless in his veins the blood of chiefs
Renown'd did flow.

So while his fancy roam'd
The world of thought, our hero fix'd his mind
On fair Columbia's land; she fired his heart:
An abstract view he took of her contèst,
And dwelt in brief upon the strife, which late
Impell'd her dauntless sons to wage with arms
The holy task against the rebel foe,
And thus he to himself their deeds rehears'd:

“Ah! yes, 'twas in that land of liberty,

Where Freedom sprung from out a tyrant's heart,
And wrench'd from his firm grasp the starry gem
Which now adorns her brow—once the jewel
Rarest of his crown; as yet none brighter hath
Been found upon the wide earth thro'. But late,
In that far clime, just as her radiance shone
O'er all the world, and she had scarce enjoy'd
Of liberty a century, Sedition
Rear'd her haughty crest of blood. The blow
Aim'd at her life, to stab her unawares,
Fell from a traitor's hand—the hand of one
Who in the fostering lap of Freedom had been
From his childhood nurtured till he up
To manhood grew. But mark! that son un-
grateful
His own mother struck! O shame of Freedom's
race!
Oh, why did anger urge thy hand to do the deed!
But soon the blow evoked the chastisement
Then due; for retribution quick soon fell

Upon the culprit's head. Thy act was rash,
And proved thy own downfall.

Then the blast
Of Liberty thro' all the land did sound—
'Arise, ye loyal men! awhile forego
The joys that freedom brings to man. To arms!
Vile Treason's cannon echoes thro' the land.'
Her loyal sons the summons heard; for soon,
Obedient to her clarion call, they from
Columbia's cities, mines, and fertile lands,
In thousands to her holy rescue flew.

"But down she was awhile, and wept. All seem'd
In darkness lost. Faint on earth she languish'd
In the gloom. But yet no loyal heart despair'd,
For in their breasts they felt the spirit burn
Of their great sire, George Washington, champion
Of the free; a noble man with lasting name—
A name that all who freedom love revere;
A hero brave of heart who would not brook

A haughty kingdom's insolence upon their shores,
But dared with willing heart and hand to raise
His fallen kind; and therefore fought for, lived for
Nothing but his country's good at heart.

'Let all Columbia's loyal sons unite
Against the foe their efforts to the cause;
'Tis for the general good; for godless they,
Tho' Freedom's children'—seemed in that dark hour
To whisper softly from his hallowed shade.

“At length the genius of Columbia's chiefs,
The free, the bold, her loyal-hearted sons,
Great armies mass'd and with unerring wisdom
Hurl'd the North's gigantic power against
Her frantic hordes of lawless foes. Yet well
The rebels wag'd the war thro' wildest scenes
Of carnage—in their most disastrous days
Stood firm; for they a haughty rule maintain'd;
Submit they would not to a selfish triumph;
For, being the same race, no cowardice

Had they in their hearts. O ye Christians,
ponder!

Her deadliest foes were her own race! for ere
The pride and passions of the stubborn foe
Were quell'd, the North's best blood was shed in
streams

That crimson'd woodland, hill, and southern plain.
But ineffective proved the rebels' aims
To circle out a nation of their own.

Before the Northmen brave the traitors fell:
Poor, blind, reckless fools, they rush'd impetuous
To their own destruction! In calmer sense
Each one now feels the burning shame that brands
His brow *a traitor*. Ah, who can tell us
All the mischief their wild spirits wrought!

"Columbia fair! thank God, the foe hath fail'd
To pluck one star from off thy diadem.
Now Discord from thy cherish'd land is swept;
As there, from utmost hell with flaming brand

And torch to burn the air and desolate
Thy fields, no longer round Rebellion stalks
To disunite with iron hands thy frame
Of States ; she in her bloody ashes smoulders :
Naught is left of her but charr'd remains ;
And Carnage, too, with all her ghostly horrors,
Lies there buried in her gory shroud. Peace
Connects the sever'd parts ; the sword and
sheath

Are with the olive-branch of friendship twin'd ;
Their once irreverent hands in friendly links
Are grasp'd again ; the rash alone still boast
Sedition's spirit lives yet unsubdued,
While in the North a faction base keep down
Their fallen foe. Blind bigots ! know ye not
That mercy follows triumph ? The brave do
Pity, not abuse, when down, their foes.

“ Yet,

’Tis not for us to say what they should do ;
Right glad are we to learn that now no smoke

Of war doth darken more Columbia's skies.

'Twas but a cloud that dim'd her starry zone,

As she, dear friend of the opprest, in all

Her former glory shines. Bright as the sun,

That flings its ray o'er hill and stream, her
splendor

Burns more clear; for now Columbia all

The world admires. E'en those who deem'd her
lost,

Her glory now applaud. Ah! well thou dost,

Kind friend of man, that praise deserve. In song

Thy bards thy deeds will sing; thy orators

Pour forth the valor of thy patriot sons,

And let, in records lasting thro' all time,

Their actions live; their names commemorate

On tomb, in trench, and lonely solitude,

With those of many an ardent exile too,

Who came from climes remote and nobly fought

With thy brave sons for freedom. There, with

The native born, in moonlit glade secure,

The Briton, Teuton, Celt, together sleep.—
Oft may the gentle dews of heaven fall
And kiss the slabs that mark their resting place !”

So then, with eye uplifted, Rafael scann’d
The sky. He saw the storm had past, that all
Was clear. Yet, fearful lest he might
Encounter a marauding gang of foes
Around the solitudes of ocean prowling
(Nor one, nor two, he fear’d to meet; for tho’
Still young in years, yet few his strength could
boast;

And he who dared dispute his way, he’d rap:
With well-aim’d blows, his sconce, until his eyes
Would flash with stars),—he quit the lonely shore.

Just then, the sun behind the west’ring wave
Went down, and twilight, with her russet veil,
Enwrapt the scenes around where Rafael all
The noon-half of that day had loiter’d.



CHAPTER II.

ON a slope with tropic verdure teeming,
Where Nature in her vernal beauty held
Her fragrant reign, between the hours of noon
And eve, screened from the sunny beam, beneath

A bowering mango broad, there, side by side,
With all the world at peace, two mortals sat
Entranced in moments balmy, merrily
With their musical mother-tongue prattling
Praises lavishly, each on each, soft from
Their two hearts beating then with fondest hopes.

The maiden's dark eyes fring'd with lashes silken,
Softly in their soul-lit ardor temper'd
With love's light, and pure as Venus brightly
In a twilight sky of amber gleaming,
Reflective and brimful of love's romance,
Dreamingly speaking a language rare,
Tenderly gazed in conscious bliss divine
Upon the chosen partner of her heart,
Marking his growth of form and mind how fair,
How bland! with all the graces which adorn
Young manhood's prime; combining with those
 charms
Of person rare a just and generous heart.

She loved him for that goodness of his heart,
And prized him also for his mind well-form'd
To govern less enlighten'd souls ; his courage
To explore untrodden ways.

But how looked
She attractive in her lover's eyes,
Which made his manly heart to softly yield
To her enchantment ? He many rivals had ;
Great ones knew her worth, and sought her hand.
Many wish'd her for their bride to heighten with
Her dazzling charms their pomp of life. But he
Alone was her heart's choice. He first among
Her suitors rank'd. They loved her for her wealth
And skill in graceful arts ; but Rafael prized
Morena's heart and beauty more.

She too

Amid gay rivals shone supreme, yet held
Her Rafael captive by the matchless grace
Of mind and heart indulgent nature had
From birth on her bestow'd. She, superior far

Among kind fortune's brilliant stars, outshone
The rest. To Rafael, she the fairest
Of her sex,—a precious gem,—his queen of grace,
By love and fortune crown'd. None fairer 'neath
The stars of heaven shone. Not since the birth
Of Time had kind creation graced this sphere
With one more lovely in his sight. In brief,
To him Morena was divine.

'Twas thus
Beneath that green alcove, these compliments
The lovers' time employ'd.

Then softly 'neath
The blissful weight of love, on Rafael's heart
Morena's head reclined, painting her thoughts
In tinted rainbow fancies fair and bright
As the radiant arch itself that girds
The rainy depths of space with splendor round.
How lovingly there also, in melting tones,
She'd lisp his own sweet name thro' ruby lips,
Where oft he sip'd the sweets that generous flow'd

From that soft source ! Ah, knew he the purport
Of her mystic sighs—tender undertones
Of phrases broken, lingering on her lips ;
Those heavenly draughts of inspiration
Which her soul enthrall'd ; her inward spirit steep'd
In blissful ardor, breathing earthly love :
And fondly then a thousand hopes imparting
To his heart that yearn'd and bounded lightly
In his breast at the sweet words she whisper'd
With soft voice ?

Responsively, he too would breathe
Her tones she mostly loved to hear ; for then
Love reign'd in both their hearts,—
The tyrant monarch of the breast commanding
All their thoughts, their wishes, voices, hopes :
Joys each fond heart sharing—no two lips could
Murmur more. From their souls love blissful
gush'd

In words of mutual softness in each ear,
Ere their words upon the south wind fledeth

Among the leaflets born of fragrant bowers ;
Then rustling on the air their vernal chimes.
Thus love became their soul-absorbing theme :
Was given, taken, hourly sworn to, vouch'd
For by the sighs then dropping from each lip
Spontaneously for registry in heaven,
For they entranced, on earth no record kept ;
But swore they'd sacred keep their vows till o'er
Them life had lost its power.

Alternate then,
They'd look at each and smile, then clasp each
hand

With friendly fervor ; for each one felt that each
Was loved. Each ardent glance a test-oath was
Of fondness mutual, rousing up their souls
In raptures sweet yet strange, supreme, divine !
For they in that gay season were when life
Most healthful in the blood doth burn. 'Twas love
Danced in their swelling veins. But their hearts
were free

From sin, and fraught with naught but feelings
sweet;

Keeping the passion pure : Heaven's impulse,
Sweetest when fair Prudence guides the innocent
In ways of happiness and peace thro'
Future years ; these are the joys that virtue
knows,—

Joys with heartfelt love combined,—sweet passion
Of power benign,—great source of every good:
It opens up the soul of him who dares
Essay to touch the hand of modest worth.
Soon blank would be life's gayest scenes without
Fond love divine. It doth the heart distend
With social warmth ; gives fire to blighted beauty,
Cheer to care, and solace to the sad.
The beam of love the human face illumines ;
With its warmth it heightens every feature.
No fairer jewel can be found within
The soul of woman true. What man's heart is
proof

Against her ravishment when love's combined
With mortal charms ! She makes his heart
pulsate

With joys he dreams, on earth, will never end.

Thus pure and sweet their panting bosoms glow'd
With youthful love sincere. They hoped no pang,
Thro' all advancing years, their bliss would mar.

Now mark what then ensued. A change came o'er
The scene ; the twain in loving stress enthrall'd,
Sat speechless in the silence of the hour,
With purest thoughts of loving souls, shaping
In fancy's regions fair on earth a heaven
Of their own.

There, cumber'd by the weight
Of languor dreamy, Rafael then would breathe
Mysterious thoughts. He'd talk by fits, then
pause

Awhile in his ejaculations vague,

Like one who wrangles with the tyrant love,
Tormenting his fond heart. But yet he had
No wish to hide his thoughts from his dear love.
Her heart he would not wrong by word nor deed;
But then with her discernment quick, she mark'd
How soon his sighs were then repress'd, and, half
In wonder, half in mirth, Morena gazed
Upon his handsome face, defining with
A mild yet yearning eye, as best she could,
The hidden cause that bow'd his head in thought.

“Dear me,” she said, “how strange he looks!

He's like

A man just half asleep : yet he's awake,
And dreams ; loves, yet sighs not. His voice
hath lost

The tones he me just now asserted with
Avowals strong how much he loved. How
strange

A thing he is ! how dull ! capricious, too !

One time his heart all full of love, and then,
A moment after, all of troth devoid."

So then with voice so musical, so soft,
She ask'd him questions fond, to learn the secret
That he harbor'd in his breast. "Speak; what ails
Thee? Tell me, dear, what makes thee look
so sad?"

But Rafael speaketh not. "'Pshaw," she said;
"Earth holds none half so dull! Oh! would I knew
Thy mind's delirium. Ah me! 'tis sad
To think how he could thus be chang'd so soon!
Here he sits, but heareth not, or will not
List the words that question him! Ah! now thine
eye,
With coldness so indifferent seeming
Not long ago did sparkle with love's fire.
Alas! it shows thy heart's inconstancy."
Yet Rafael sat unmov'd, as if he would
Thro' fretfulness, her loving temper try.

And from her gentle breath these tender words
His silence drew :

“ Dear Rafael, take thine eye
From off the verdant ground, and gaze on me
Instead. Unveil the hidden cause. Oh, trust
Me with thy thoughts ! To thee I’m bound
beyond
A doubt : that love from thee shall ne’er depart.”

“ Nor mine from thee,” was Rafael’s quick
response.

“ Thy mind, Morena dear, hath pictur’d scenes
Unreal ; for, unabated in my heart,
Still love’s pure passion burns. What ! I now
wound

The gentle heart my soul adores ! No, no !
If e’er that time should come, I hope mine eyes
No more in life shall see the ocean gleam,
Nor sun, nor moon, nor stars above my head
Wooing the world below with glitt’ring pride.”

Then Morena saw no sorrow Rafael's
Dark eye dim'd; still they sparkled with chaste
fire,

The flame of love. But yet she wonder'd why
He had to silence yielded up his breath,
His soul entranced: what cloud in life's spring
morn

His mind o'ercast, and made his heart that time
To coldness turn. "Is the cause past finding
out?"

Morena said. "No, Morena, no;
If I the bold design unfold, wilt thou,
My love, indulgent prove?"—"I will," she said.
"Nor on me look with scornful eye when thou
Hast heard the tale?"—"Thou me canst trust.
Tell it,"

Rafael dear." Then she said, with voice elated;
"Umbrage would ill suit the heart that sighs
For thee alone."

“’Tis well; now hear!” said Rafael.

“When the sun last eve had set, and twilight,
Clad in vestment gray, enrobed the earth about,
I at my window, wrapt in thoughtful mood,
Relapsing down from wakefulness to sleep,
Sat dreamingly watching the glimmering
Of the vestal star in splendor twinkling
On my dreamy eyes its chasten’d light, soon, hush’d
To life, my breathing spirit fled to dreamland.
But in that mystic sphere, reposing then,
Where soft stillness reign’d supreme, a vision
Mellowing on my dreamy sight, came thro’
The portals of high heaven and illum’d
The sky with holy light more dazzling far
Than gleams of the broad moon. Awhile she
 paused
To gaze on the tumultuous world beneath,
Then on she came near where I dreamt.

Half in awe,

I held my breath, and wonder’d still to know

What mission from benignant heaven brought
A reigning spirit there.

“ ’Twas then I saw
She held in her left hand a batter’d shield,
On which there was engraved a tyrant’s head;
Her right a banner held, emblazon’d round
With stars, a brow of Liberty circling;
Her azure crest with blood was slightly stain’d.

“ Then nearer yet to where I dreaming was
Half quivering with affright, in splendor grand
She came; and turning down her lustrous eyes,
As radiant as the beam reflected from
The spacious shield her hand sustained, and meek
Also, and tender as religion in
A virgin’s eye, she said, with voice so sweet:
‘ O Rafael! from thy dream of ease awake.
Why in silken languor sleepeth there,
Unheeding Time’s swift flight, no enterprise
Nor work divine to do? Inaction

Bringeth sloth ; languishment dull apathy,
That may, ere long, unnerve thee quite : for fate
Decrees that every earth-born thing that doth
Remain inactive, soon shall droopeth down
To death. Therefore, be warn'd ; get up, and stir
Thy nature from its weary dream of ease.
Arise, and in the cause of Freedom do some good.
Thou hast the strength, the heavenly grace and
soul,
All purely kind for such a task. Therefore,
Arise, and with firm resolution fix'd,
Assert the justice of thy race against
Their sworn foes of Freedom. The work is that
Of love—such work that needeth all thy thoughts,
And all thy heart should feel. Now thy country is
In sorest need of thy transcending worth :
On every side she groans. A tyrant works
Destruction of thy race ; his sinful feet
Now tread the soil and from her fertile plains
Her patriots drive. Their children load the air

With cries, and bitter moanings from their widows
Rend the sky.

“ ‘ Therefore, Rafael, arise and strike
The foe. Let thy valor match thy virtues ;
God thy arm will strengthen. For to be great
In conflict right, he must be good and brave.
Rightly earn'd in fighting for his country,
Both fame and fortune crown the hero's brow :
And when he dies, on earth a noble name
He leaves : here loving hands will deck his grave
With blest immortelles.

“ ‘ So, Rafael, wherefore
Longer there be softly sway'd by idle
Dreams of life ? of faith and love why longer sing ?
Come, now, arise ! asunder tear the tyrant
From thy heart. Leave thy sighing love behind,
Else she'll wanton with thy fate ; for thou shouldst
Know the goddess coy allures her victims
Down to indolence abject : her votaries
Fame nor fortune seldom gain. Therefore,

Love's potent magic now reject. Let thy aims
In life more high ascend ; for he's unworthy
Of the heart and hand he doth not win—
Doing something great in warfare holy.
Thou wert born for this : heaven hath given thee
Both the mind and strength to fight the foe thro'
Flame and death, on ocean, lake, or field,
Till naught remains of him upon these shores,
Which doth by right of birth to thee belong ;
Then glory shall be thy reward. All will
Whisper Rafael's name ; pour it forth in prayer,
And live in lauded speech on peoples' tongues
The wide earth thro'. In brief, in every zone
Thy deeds shall be recorded in thy favor
Even when thy days of youth hath flown
Far out across Time's west'ring sea. Then thou'lt
Look upon the glorious past, and mark how well
In summer days of life, with hardy crew,
Thou didst upon the wave contend against
The foreign foe who now with fire and sword

Doth desolate thy land. Therefore, again,
Rafael, no longer be weighed down to earth
By soft, unnerving love, but now awaken
From lascivious dreaming to thy duty.
Arise, go forth; grace with my name all earth.'

"She spoke no more. Aloft her beaming eye
Look'd on a zone of gleaming stars. A mist
Her heavenly form enwapt, and veil'd her from
My gaze.

"Then thoughts so strange rush'd in my mind:
'Tween love and fame my inward spirit work'd.
I said, 'Shall I forego my love and thee,
High glory to achieve?' Too bad, I thought,
'Twould be to rend the blest communion
Of our two hearts now so firmly tied by love
And faith.

"But now it must be done. I must
From passion's dream my soul emancipate;
Must fly retirement; leave these downy beds

Of flowers, and in the world my strength attest
In deeds of arms to bring renown to me,
And peace to my distracted land, scorning
A minion, hither from a usurp'd throne,
Sent here to reign a despot in the halls
Of the famed Montezumas."

So when he
Told the tale, Morena, half unconscious
By her Rafael's side, sat mute. Ah, what
A mournful theme of fond, despairing love
Into her ear he breathed! A thousand doubts
And fears past thro' her mind, as he the tale
Rehearsed, that he no longer loved her.

Soon
Her pensive notion he perceived. How pale
Her comely cheek! Then said: "What fears annoy
Thy heart, Morena dear; why thus so sad?
Thou, perchance, art brooding without reason,
O'er some fate thou think'st will dim thine eyes
With tears."

Then lowly with soft breath he whisper'd
Hope to soothe her anxious fears, and said: "Why
from

Thy face hath gloom the light of joy withdrawn?
Look up, my dear; come, turn thy gaze on me.
Oh! tell me, love, what doubtful vision now
Thy downcast eyes portray; what woe afflicts
Thy heart; what pangs assail thy breast within.
If thy voice hath not expression lost, oh! speak:
Tell me, love, the sorrow which now sitteth
On thy heart. Come, Morena dear, look up;
Receive from me one cheering smile. I'm thine,
I vow; will serve thee, see thee as thou wish:
For thee, and thee alone, I live. Come, dear
To my soul and fair to my sight, speak out;
I'm thine, aye! truly thine as ever—yes,
And will be till life's spell is broke."

So then,

Obedient to his voice, Morena raised
Her languid eyes, that plainly told how much

She drank the tender tale which made the
name

Of Rafael dear ; her looks all woe-begone,
An anguish'd spirit ; in fine, a thousand
Signs of grief without, how much she suffer'd
Mentally,—how much she loved. But oh ! such
were

The tearful looks she then to Rafael gave
That even Joy herself would grieve to see
The heart-drops which her sadden'd soul forced up
From well of purest grief within upon
Her silken lashes, then in deepest sorrow
Shading, as they rose all warm and limpid
In her eye.

So Rafael, then by pity
Moved, observed how much his love, meantime,
pour'd

Forth upon the breeze alternate sobs and sighs.
Why cry, Morena ? Weep not, love. Oh ! what
Emotion tender forceth from their source

These heart-born tears to stream so down thy
cheek ?

Tell me, is thy heart with anguish bleeding ?
Do these tears arise from thence to signalize
Young Joy in thine heart is drown'd ? Oh ! let me
know."

Morena then her grieving stillness broke
With sad voice low : " Alas ! how changed, when
thou

Hast been so true ! O Rafael, meditate.
Flattering, vain, that vision, and delusive.
Give credence none to what you thought it said.
'Twas but a mystic phantom, born of dreamland,
Which, when thou the tedious hours did court
Soft on thy couch, flit on the slumbrous air.
Ah, Rafael ! rush not forward ; ponder, pry
The dark futurity. Oh, think what ills
May come ; how much do snares of life await
The youth, tho' fortified with holy thoughts

And fond precepts maternal,—what dangers
May befall when he on untried paths doth
Venture! Now thy heart ambition yearneth.
Alas! for fame, thou wouldst in human gore
Thy hands imbrue with sword destructive,
Wielding it against superior force of arms
Which may perchance, ere long, thee crush amid
The stricken dead; for adverse fate doth oft
Befall the bravest youth of Adam's race.
Few triumph o'er the chance of war; then why,
Rafael, thus leave thy friends, thy native land,
To traverse seas unknown, and there, perchance,
Be wreck'd or thrown upon some island vast
'Mid tribes carnivorous, when thou hast joy,
Content, and pastime here the tardy time
To kill with thy companions? For thou wert
Born for peace, not war: thine ears for music
Form'd, not battle's din; in brief, Apollo's lute,
Not Mars' dread sounds. Oh! therefore, Rafael,
Quell a moment thy heart's yearning fond. 'Twas

But a vision, light as the breath that breathed
Thy name—that beckon'd out Fame's radiant goal
Where all look'd bright, but yet delusive still;
Aye, even transient as a rainbow, arching
Heaven high with belts of fire resplendent
To one's sight, yet wasting as it shines;
For there, where all looks pure and bright, doth
soon

Become as darksome as before. So let
The vision not betray nor lead thee on,
But pause in thy career, ere thou doth find
Thy hopes of worldly greatness all in vain;
Yes, Rafael dear, oh! prize thy peaceful hours more,
And with me learn the sacred lessons
Which the stars that shine above do nightly teach."

"Must I, then," said Rafael, "exhaust my life
In sighs? Let love pronounce my destiny."

Then, laying her soft hand in his, she said:

"Ah! Rafael dear, I pray thee, mark the toils

And dangers of the treacherous deep
Which now thy daring spirit longs to brave."

"No fear have I," Rafael replied : "see there,
Morena ; yonder in the distance stands
A structure grand and high, now by the moss
Of ages crown'd. Yon crumbling pile, in times
Gone by, was my forefathers' seat. There, from
Its casement, oft have I in infancy
Look'd out and watch'd with joy the dashing
waves

In foam break on the rocky knoll which forms
Its rugged base. 'Twas on those waves in youth
That Neptune me his trident gave, and there,
Oft since, have I within my buoyant skiff
Been tost about, a youthful mariner."

"A wayward prank of idle youth,—no more,"
Morena said ; "but now, Rafael, thou art
To manhood grown ; thy mind with reason fraught.

So, wherefore risk the faithless main, or let
The din of noisy war now vex thy peace?"

"To fight," Rafael replied, "in Freedom's cause
Until my arm—if fate so wills—shall sink
Beneath the weighty sword, all for thy brow,
My dear, the laurel wreath of victory earning."

"But thou in tropic calms, Rafael, upon
The liquid brine may languish, or p'rhaps, find,
When out upon the ocean broad, thy barque is
Far too frail to dash o'er seas tempestuous :
The billow of the angry blast to rush
Against its side, its rocking keel careen :
Then, oh, who knows what terrors might arise
To call thee to its soundless depths below,
Without a funeral rite nor hallow'd mark
To tell me where thy cold remains may sleep!
Then gentle peace on earth 'good-bye,' my voice
Would murmur evermore; grief my guest would be.

I'd weep my life away ; but then, dissolved
In tears, I'd run to ocean's bed, if fate
Ordain'd, and form thy watery shroud. But yet,—
Ah ! Rafael dear, take heed,—still at my side
Reign lord of my heart. Power nor wealth in life
Are naught without thee. Cold and valueless
Will be all things about if thou doth leave
Thy native place, where love and joy prevail,
To mingle with tumultuous men at war.”

Yet still her mild persuasion fail'd to lure
Him from his lofty aims. Ambition yet
Knock'd proudly at his heart ; and so obedient
To its promptings, said :

“Such vicissitudes
Are naught to me, for duty spurns such toils,
However vast. I feel as if I now
Could fight in zones far off, where torrid heats
Breed plague and pestilence, or at the poles
Abide, where nature bound in chains of ice,

Sleeps fast beneath eternal snows. 'Tis now,
In truth, the only love I feel."

At this,

Morena's eye with jealous fire flash'd ;
Then half in anger, half in doubt, she said :
" O thou inconstant man, I fear 'tis thro'
The gay, admiring world, where beauty reigns,
That thou wouldst roam, and there in wanton love
Entrall'd, that callous soon, and cold as ice
For me thy heart will grow ; for absence chills
The flame divine. Man is weak when woman
Charms him with her beauty. But beware.
The wretch who wantons after every face
He views, from faded health unto an early death
A painful life doth hourly linger."

Then, free and open as the passing air,
Rafael replied : " Be not suspicious, love :
Too much I value thy celestial worth,
To leave thee in despair and wander with

A mind unfix'd strange regions to explore
In search of beauty new. I'll from my love
No rebel be. No, by my troth, I swear,
That love's seductive wiles shall never lure
Me to the couch where beauty slumbers; nor
Shall beauty's tempting smile from prudence wean
My youthful heart and bid it weakly yield
To wanton joys, nor things that dazzle sight,
Nor merry songs, nor plaintive tunes: in brief,
Not all seductive love's allurements shall
Estrange thy Rafael's heart from thee. For tho'
By tyrant love now chain'd, yet I shall be
No other woman's slave; nor her caprice
Nor fortune proud me from thee shall entice.
Thy modest worth alone doth recompense
My ardent vows. Be I 'mid genial airs
In summer's balmy climes, or nipt by frost
Of winter keen, thou'lt find no alter'd love
In me to damp thy soul with grief, and wreck
In life thy hopes. Ah, no! for me thou'lt find

As constant as the magnet to the poles;
E'en as the moon the tides controls, so thou
Doth me. Content am I with thee. In vain
I'd search the half earth thro' to find
One lovelier than thyself—fond partner
Of my fate and fortunes. Thy mother Eve
Of holy fame more fair than thou was not.
All the charms that others boast are in thee
Concentrated quite; nor greatest fame, nor heaps
Of treasured gold from Montezuma's
Caverns deep to me are dearer; a gem
More rare and brighter than a star not known;
More charming than a queen of royal court—
Mine in heart and soul, I love thee next my God.
Therefore, Morena dear, have done with doubting.
Thou mayst live to see how vain thy fears have
been.

My way is mark'd, my mind made up; and thou,
Instead of weeping tears to soften down
My heart and win me over to thy will

Thro' fear and doubt from waging with my sword
The righteous war that leads to victory,
Should, like the ladies fair of olden times,
Who bade their valiant courtiers take up arms
In a just cause, me likewise urge to drive
The bold invader from these shores."

"Yet think,
O Rafael, think," she said, "how can my heart,
When thou art gone, the parting pang endure !"

"Be not childish, love ; 'tis thine to bear ; for thou
May just as well command the sun that rolls
O'erhead to stop its course, as now to swerve
Me from my resolution firm. E'en tho'
Sorrow may thy raven tresses blanchen,
And tears thine eyes' expressive beauty dim,
I shall awhile forego these rosy hours.
Duty calls me hence, and bids me never
Kneel a slave to haughty power in this land
Where my forefathers were created free.

No : I hate the tyrant and his minions.

What ! shall I, forsooth, sit down and fold

My arms when loud the voice of Freedom's heard

O'er field and flood, from dell to mountain-top

That now her bleeding patriots dying are,

Beneath the sickly sun on their own land,

And with extended hands, and moans, beseeching

Death with friendly stroke for to release them

From their shameful fates ? Oh ! I spurn the tool

Of France and all such tyrants, minions, things !

Mourns he the widow's loss, or doth he grieve

With the poor orphan made thus desolate

Of heart ? Not he. On plunder he is bent,

To gratify his pride ; on blood, to glut

His thirst that may enhance his power : for he

Hath drag'd the peasant from his lowly cot,

The drooping aged snatch'd from his leaning
staff ;

Torn from their sickly beds the lingering weak,

And thrust them, all enfeebled, in foul cells,

Because they in their sense of right maintain'd
Fair freedom's speech !

“ But doom'd beneath their roofs
Of mold and filth of dungeon damp they may
Be for a time ; yet the sun doth shine
Above their sorrowing heads. Justice still
Doth weigh the balance. God will see the
measure

Right ; and oh ! if He doth strength impart
To willing hands, we shall not know an hour
Of rest until this land is free.”

At this,
Morena's jealous fear gave way. A flood
Of light broke in upon her darken'd soul ;
And clearer grew fair Reason's beam. New truths
Her mind enlighten'd. Her brighten'd look did
then

The triumph of his suit attest. Long since
Had Rafael won her heart, but he now gain'd
A victory o'er her mind. Her answering smiles

His warlike course endorsed. He then, the idol
Of her bosom's love, would be her care discreet.

"Ah, yes," she said, "I now all fear resign,
For with thy love, Rafael, I still am blest.
'Tis ordain'd by Him above that we should
Part: I'll trust in thee, nor longer bid thee
Now defer thy duty."

Then afterward,
Half boastingly, she said that she was stout
Of heart—could fight as well as he himself.

"Oh, take me with thee, Rafael, to the wars,"
She said. "Fear not: woman tho' I am, thou'lt
Find me brave. Much I can endure—aye! more,
Perchance, than thou conceives: if not to fight,
I can upon the wounded wait, and stanch
The blood the deadly missile makes; assuage
Their woes: a balm their dying spirits need
To charm them with new hopes of life."

When with
These words she had her venturesome deeds
expressed,

Rafael glanced with admiration on
Her soft, angelic form, and said :

“No, no !

Morena dear, the task is quite too hard ;
Thy sex too weak, too finely strung, in shape
Too delicate for toils and dangers of
Tumultuous war ; such hazards are for man
Severe ; nor could he them withstand, nor brave,
If duty did not urge, necessity
His strength and skill demand.”

Morena,

Then, her Rafael hail'd with more congenial mood.
She praised him then with accents kind, admired
His soul so full of action warm, as if he had
By nature been for contest bred.

So there

She then with hopeful heart and mind perused

The future thro', and raised a palace grand
All splendor in her radiant fancy bright,
With glittering titles, honors too to share
In happy future days with her young friend.

“When far away thou art,” she said, “my much
Loved lyre shall make my sinking heart
rejoice ;

And ere I seek repose, my wakeful eyes
At night, the tardy time to kill, shall glean
The legendary tale.”

Then wrangling Mars
And Cupid quarter'd in their leafy camp,
Seeing the sun dipt on the ocean's verge,
Up from their seats arose, and, arm-in-arm,
In lovelinks fondly twined, they saunter'd with
An easy gait along a pathway ample,
Wide, and girt with flowering shrubs.

Soon they reach'd,
With graceful step and slow, the palace of

Don Pedro, fair Morena's honor'd sire,
Whose shiny pate a bald index reveal'd
That there old Time a barber turn'd and shorn
It of the silken locks his youth had wove.
But yet he bore his weight of years well.
He sturdy was with veins by age unchill'd;
In sight yet unimpair'd; enjoying length
Of days—sweet blessings of a well-earn'd past
Upon his rich possessions broad.

Just then,

With prideful step Don Pedro trod his lawn,
And met Morena and her lover brave,
But not with scornful brow; but smiling, low
He bent his head, and hail'd with outstretch'd
hands

The loving twain with hearty cheer. For well
He knew brave Rafael's heart, his aims in life,
Its sweet civilities himself too well
To cross our hero's love with warnings harsh
And frowns importunate; for he could see

The lovers were to each betroth'd, and 'gainst
Their yearning souls no opposition firm
He placed, but nursed and cherish'd the best gift
Of heaven, gave it growth while young and
tender
Were their hearts enwreathed with fondness holy.

Now proud Don Pedro also felt to think
His daughter won the heart of one so brave,
With rectitude, undeviating from
The ways of truth that grace and dignify
The mellow morn of youth and ripen'd age.
For well he knew how pure was Rafael's caste :
The son of an undaunted Mexican
In arms renown'd, who, bold and resolute,
Had often there with martial firmness led
His matchless soldiers 'gainst Columbia's hosts
At Monterey. So Don Pedro anxious was,
That Rafael's honor'd name should live from age
To age, and hoped his blood would never cease

In human veins to course till blood and earth,
On the last day, were one mix'd element.

So, thus for Rafael's weal solicitous,
Don Pedro, moved by fond paternal love,
Him warmly held fast by the hand.

Rafael,

Meantime, gracefully the sire saluted.

With reverend hand he raised his hat, and
bow'd

With forehead bare down to the Don, then said :

"Thou dost the evening's balmy air respire,
Señor."

" 'Tis nature's cordial, good my boy,
For spirits low ; the heart it cheers and life
Prolongs," was old Don Pedro's answer.

Then

Marking well the vein of humor in the Don,
Rafael soon perceived the opportunity

And place inclined him to engage
Awhile the mind congenial of the sire.

Tho' never broach'd, as yet, by word of mouth,
He there and then essay'd to ask the hand
Of her he loved, in wedlock holy.

Now,

Quick with joy Don Pedro's heart did beat ;
That instant there his hand felt free to give
Rafael his daughter fair ; but he a moment
There abstracted stood in thought ; for then he felt
In duty bound his daughter's heart to guard
Against desire too quick, then burning, p'rhaps,
In Rafael's breast ; so, deigning a reply,
Don Pedro clung fast hold of Rafael's hand,
And said :

“ Rafael, well I know thy honor'd race ;
Thy father was himself a soldier brave,
But who, while coping 'gainst superior force, .
Amid the arduous strife fell dead at Monterey ;

His name, his history, and his fate are now
Upon his country's page inscribed ; and thou,
The sole survivor of that warrior tried
In contest fierce against Columbia's host,
Will ne'er, I trow, dishonor the good name
Of him thy valiant parent kind. Upon
Thy sapling youth a watchful eye he kept,
And pruned thy budding manhood of dank weeds,
To bend thy mind to good and give thy tree
Of life its stalwart growth. Therefore, thou seest,
I know thy grafted merits well ; aye ! more
Than that,—I know, also, that up to date
Thy life by crime nor falsehood hath been stain'd."

Then Rafael lowly to the Don bent down
His head, and there, with manly heart and voice,
He told him all about his mission bold.

Don Pedro murmur'd out his praises loud,
And said : " Brave youth, long mayst thou live
To raise with valiant arm the sword on sea

Or land in Freedom's cause ! A lasting name
Is worthy of the brave. All hallow'd be
Thy fame when thou art from existence gone,
Thro' death to mingle with immortal gods
In heavens of light and bliss eternal.

“ To thee

I'll give my daughter fair. Her I shall guard,
Near at my side when thou, Rafael, goeth hence
Manfully in thy prime to dare the foe
In battle fierce ; and when the labor, thirst,
And perils of thy patriotic course
Are o'er, my daughter shall thy worth reward,
And crown thy wish, my honor'd youth, with clams
To bind thee fondly with a thousand ties
Connubial in the future. Now, what says
Morena, eh ? speak, child.”

“ Oh, I'm agreed

That Rafael shall go forth in Freedom's cause
To earn a place among the chivalrous sons
Of men.”

“Well said, my child,” the sire replied.
“May heaven bless ye both. May nothing mar
Your hopes of future happiness.” Then he took
Each by the hand, and led them from the lawn,
With him the evening meal to share.



CHAPTER III.

Now ere a month its course had run, Don Pedro
Call'd from far and near unto his hall, friends
And dames, and sires old, fair beauteous youths,
With maidens lovely—all Morena's friends
To join with him in banquet of good things.

So there, as was their wont on gala days,
They flock'd from fair Sonora's dingles, hills,
And dells, around in festive throng, and paid
The alcalde high their kind regards.

Many

A friend he had,—his urbane nature won
Them over to his side; and on that night
His spacious halls with a gay throng were fill'd :
There all within betoken'd splendor rare ;
All, in fine, was brilliant, gay.

“Welcome, friends,”

Don Pedro said, as they approach'd him near.

Then soon around the board in festive cheer
They all in groups assembled, sat and quaff'd
Their cups brimful of ruddy wine, which fill'd
All hearts with pleasure, joy, and song.

Rafael

There was seen ; all *his* form beheld ; maidens fair,
With earnest eyes, his dress, his gait, admired ;

And, meantime, envied his Morena near,
Who at his side, in dress with pearl and gold
Enwrought, so pensive, silent sat.

They spoke

On themes both grave and gay; on fashion, arts;
But yet the subject of their converse ran
Mostly in the vein of stormy war.
All mark'd how glib this made Don Pedro's
tongue;

A noble son-in-law in prospect, p'rhaps,
Or still, perchance, the cup's inspiring power
His heart had warm'd; for oh, how animate
He was! how keen and piercing then his eye!
The fire of courage burn'd within his breast;
For he tho' long from cares of state retired,
Yet kept an eye upon his country's rights,
And fearlessly dared, before his friends,
To scan with nicest scrutiny the wrongs
She then endured.

So there, up from his seat,
Obedient to his warmth, Don Pedro rose
And spaketh to his mirthful guests around:
“This night, my friends, we have assembled here
To pay the homage due the gallant men
Who earnestly with noble hearts and hands
Go forth, at break of day, with holy zeal
And righteous vengeance in their breasts combined,
To smite, with frames of iron strength, and hands
Of steel, their country’s foes with fiery shafts
Of war on the broad sea in stanch craft built
Of firmest oak, all metal-bound. If Time’s
Allotted span had not my date of life
Abridged, but gave me strength in my decline,
Old as I am, I swear I would myself
Go forth and wield with pliant aim the sword
To rend from the enslaved the galling chains
Which the despotic hands of Max hath wrought;
Aye! the tyrant’s stern commands rebuke; avenge

Myself on him who hath come here to rob
Us of our hapless land, and so, thereby,
Would string new honors on life's lengthen'd
chain; yes,

Altho' the vital thread that links my soul
To life should the next moment sever'd be.
No fear of death have I; for die I must
When nature calls me hence to mingle with
The earth from whence I came; but *when* I die
I want my bones laid down in Freedom's lap
Of earth, which I myself have help'd to make."

Then shouts applauding rang throughout the hall,
"Well said, Señor! go on." While there, meantime,
Vivacious yet, Don Pedro quaff'd again
The warm libation down, and thus forthwith
His speech resumed:

"But mark the despot's craft:

Here, my friends, with tongue so mild and
plausible,

He solely comes, he says, to pacify
Our hapless discontents domestic !
Now, his deeds alone his tongue belie ;
The wily knave unblushingly with sword
In hand, now strews our loved domains with those
Who dare with arms defend their native land.
In dignified disgrace a ruthless wretch
He stands before the world for his attempt
To subjugate our land, where he a horde
Of traitors—base-born, cringing knaves—around
Himself hath drawn ; but they disloyal are
In hopes of gain ; the spoils of office
Their reward. In guise dissembling, they
For their excuse proclaim that the black cloud
Of fate hangs o'er the land ; that peace hath flown
From these unhappy shores ; that factions tend
Republics, and foment internal feuds ;
Therefore a monarchy they wish. These are
The views of those whose factious voice hath
brought

Us oft upon the verge of grim rebellion ;
But I, for one, disdain those recreant knaves,
Who for a monarch's badge their birthright sold.
Those self-same secret foes, who often here,
Time and again, have, under the mild form
Of freedom, played the tyrant's rôle, have sought
Of late, in guise of amity, by bribes
To play upon my credent mind and win
Me over to the bold usurper's power,
So I with their consenting voice shall crown
Him great. *Him great, forsooth !* a pigmy man !
High dudgeon vast of peerless Mexico !
Fit only for a king ! right royal liege
Just from the mighty house of Hapsburg, *do*
Accept the crown. Take it now, adventurer ;
We barter oft with traffickers in thrones
For promised honors. 'Tis cheap, aye ! *very* cheap,
Indeed ! yet, we ask no more ; 'tis thine ; do
With it what you will ; unearth its treasures vast,
And feed thy courtly drones and titled things—

Those idols of courts and puppets of pomp—
My traitor countrymen in royal garb
Of state enrobed, who strut and lounge about,
First favorites of thy smile!

“O ye schemers vile!

Ye'll down upon your knees, and yet atone,
With penitent hearts, past sins. *I* will not bite
Thy tempting bait; hence to some other brook,
And there try hook a more confiding gudgeon.
What! obey the sovereign whim of despots
In my native land! Oh, infamy supreme!

“Yea, my friends, them have I shun'd. O fate!
Avert their schemes. I scorn the man who
makes

A tyrant of himself; and not, so long
As I survive, will I unfaithful prove
To yon true flag that waves for man and Freedom!

“So now let all unite and look on each
With eyes fraternal, else greater evils

May our land befall. All feuds domestic
Should be now forgotten quite ; aye, buried
In our hearts, where kindred feelings should
prevail.

We should in friendliness and concord live,
That we may hope to see our country freed
From despots and their myrmidons. A youth
There stands with heart for the encounter rife ;
He hath his brain and blood from valiant chiefs
Illustrious, and all of matchless prowess
Famed ; and skill'd in naval art, he foremost
Now among his classmates stands confest :
Come hither, champion brave ! the rostrum mount :
Let's hear thee speak."

Then down Don Pedro sat
Mid shouts prolong'd and loud thro' hearty cheers
three :

His counsel there by all approved.

Now,

Peal after peal, to the festoon'd roof, shot up

For Rafael brave. "A speech, a speech essay,"
They cried. So then, obedient to their wish,
Forth Rafael stept and fill'd his goblet rare—
All gold inlaid—with ruddy wine: then down
His throat the soul-inspiring draught he pour'd;
The juice spread through his frame; his breast
inspired;

With joy his heart elated. Then to his knees
Their pristine spring he gave, and high above
The rest he stood. Awhile prelusive round
The hall he gazed, then forth his tongue these words
Essay'd:

"Ye sires and sons, ye maidens,
Wives, and mothers all, a bold invader
From a scepter'd throne 'cross far-off seas,
Hath with his foreign legions bold, all arm'd
With war's destructive engines vile, come here
Unsummon'd to these shores auriferous,
And, vainly vaunting of his combats won
With reeking blade upon red foreign fields

Of slaughter, audaciously, with breath accurst
Proclaims himself aloud sole potentate
Of Mexico, our blessèd land, to rule
With civil laws profess'd ; but 'tis to shackle
Firm in tyrant chains of adamant our race,
Whom he, faint image of his God, adjudges
Rude, unpolish'd ; so they, when down enthrall'd,
Must bow to him who thus approves himself
So great. Oh, Heaven forbid that we should e'er
Allegiance own to him, the foreign sneak !
No ! I, with other freeborn Mexicans,
Shall never servile bend a knee to do
In our land a foreign monarch homage.
Montezuma's sons alone can judge
What still is best for erring Mexico ;
For they, although at times their country may
Be rent by civil feuds, yet want no tool
Of haughty France to rule with tyrant laws
Her disaffected people. Her patriots,
Brave and true, fair Freedom's charter will maintain

Thro' fire and blood, ere they bow down their necks
To the despotic yoke a tyrant's hand
Hath wrought. No; we, with firm and righteous
hands,

Shall wield the sword thro' dangers e'en to death
Against that scepter'd minion of a king,
Who, if it be not wrested from his grasp,
Will sit in pride of purple state enthroned
In Montezuma's halls, and there, exulting
O'er his wondrous blood and rank, will chuckle
To himself, 'I a prince imperial was,
But now I'm Mexico's great emperor.'

O man, vain man! thou tak'st upon thyself
Much pride. Thou'lt wear thy bloodstain'd laurels
low.

A juster crown the generous wear. Doing
Private good with moral worth would earn
Thee far more lasting praise. Thy name in song
Immortalized would be, and orphans too,
On bended knees, would raise their voice on high

And pray : ‘ that monarch best deserves to reign
Who studies the just welfare of mankind ;’
For on that gilded throne, my friends, he can
But sit awhile in purple state, without
A wreath of merit on his brazen brow ;
And there presiding with his courtly drones,
Talk and smile o’er his great triumph bold
In this our land by wealth so favor’d.
Besides, his life may with his reign here end ;
An arm indignant of some patriot youth
The blow may strike, or p’rhaps he’ll be removed,
By flight compell’d to seek his rest in Gaul,
And there, thro’ shame, regret his usurp’d course
In Mexico.

“ Therefore, my friends, let naught
Alarm us. To one end let all unite.
A kindred spirit will sustain us firmly
As doth the oak the ivy, if we fight
For Freedom in this land where tyranny
Not long can reign.

“So now let every one
Who loves his native land, himself arouse
From out the sullen dearth of sloth. ’Tis no time
For sleep, but action on the field, or sea.
All arm’d, here let him look upon this flag
With raptur’d eye admiringly, to make
His heart undaunted rise and urge him forth
With all the fierceness God hath given, to prove
His valor on the field. Let him unheed
The menace of superior force. If we,
Forsooth, have not an equal force, we have,
At least, far more than equal fire to urge
Us on to meet the foe and struggle to be free.
Therefore, be not dismay’d, but scorn his laws,
His pleas, his awful threats, his spite confound,
His puny power hate: in short, let all
But cowards, who with diffidence look on,
Regardless of their country’s fate, rebuke
The stern, unblushing gaze of despots.
Here, with oppression’s sword, one hath let out

Our patriots' unoffending blood. But tho'
They cold and stiff do sleep beneath the soil
That gave them birth, yet still their spirits rise,
Their voices mingle with the wind, and urge
Us onward to avenge their cruel fates."

Saying which, then Rafael's men stept forth,
And from their scabbards dangling at their sides
Their trusty swords withdrew. They crost their
own

With his bright blade, then down upon their knees,
All frank, with open hearts, aloud exclaimed :

"Tho' fate may frown adverse, and cowards scoff
And jeer, yet still thro' toil and peril vast,
On sea or land, with our bold chief, who hath
The strength and mind to guide us rightly where
The battle presses most, we swear to wage,
Thro' smoke and fire, victorious war until
We're from our shameful bondage loosed, and peace

And freedom are, throughout the land, declared
Once more."

This touch'd the list'ners' hearts. All felt
Their breasts were moved with love of land, and
hail'd

The braves with one accordant cheer. From man
To man, from maid, and matron bending 'neath
Her weight of years, the praise went round. All
grasp'd,

In turn, our hero firmly by the hand.

Thrice three times, three hundred tongues rang out
His name; the roof caught up the sound, and still
The name of Rafael Alvarez prolong'd.

Thus, unmark'd by all, the time went by, till
From the east on flew, o'er land and sea,
The new-born day with silvery pinions dipt
All in the purpling dyes of morn, and swept
The gloomy night's dim shadow from the earth.

Then Rafael rose amid the group, look'd out,
And said: "Come, friends and comrades all, 'tis time
To go. The morning bird with joyous notes
Doth greet the day."

Then oh, what shaking of
Hands commenced! what kissing there! How
many
Parting tears, like jets of pearly dew, shone
In the eyes of maidens fair, as they prest
Round, with beating hearts, to bid from trembling
lips

The last fond word "adieu." Commingling
With regret and fear some thought that fate would
Mark the steps of the adventurers bold
With some mishap unknown!

Then from the palace
Onward they in file continuous follow'd
Rafael, who, with footstep firm, then march'd
Majestic down a winding cleft of rock
Thro' which the Gulf wind, wafting cool and fresh,

Toy'd with his raven hair. His ears attuned
From boyhood up, soon caught the murmur
Of the shore. The ocean broaden'd to his view,
And out upon its heaving bosom, bounding
Lightly to and fro, he saw his craft
In warlike, martial aspect frowning, just
Five furlongs from the shore.

Then Rafael blew
From bugle horn a blast; the sightless note
Across the main on pinions briny flew.
The boatswain from the deck the summons heard,
And there and then, with well-tried seamen two,
They pull'd with practiced arm the yawl-boat thro'
The dark-blue wave, until her swift keel delved
A channel snug within the beachy sand.

Meanwhile, upon the sandy beach there stood
Bold Rafael with Morena from the group
Apart; his arm the fond guerdon that twined
Her fair waist. Speechless there, almost as pale

As one in ghostly grief, she stood with head
Downcast and aching eyes with tears bedew'd,
Presaging some disaster dire might rise
And sever him from her.

“What ails thee, love ?

Thou seem'st unhappy with emotions strong.
Now, come, cheer up, be wise, and emulate
What reason best conceives, ere a pang severe
May rend the link that binds thy soul to
earth.”

“Ah me !” she sighed, “ere I by fate am from
Thee torn apart, one boon, Rafael, I crave.”

“Name it, love. Be brief; time flies.”—“Know
then,” she said,

“When I am left behind, unscreen'd from eyes
Too jealous of thy love, alas ! the hours,
Day after day, week in and week out, will
Come and go, all full of painful watchings
For thy glad return from scenes remote, where

Thou, estranged from my fond view, perchance,
may

Soon forget to think of me. Oh, then, how
Wretched would my life be spent! but yet I hope,
Fond Rafael, prudence will thy actions guide,
And honor ne'er forsake thy heart when thou
Amid the tumult of the mad'ning world
Doth mingle.

“Here, amid these joyous scenes,
From morn till night, I shall incessant roam
And sigh until I see thee once again:
Aye! unmindful of fair nature's beauties,
I, from rosy hour of morn, till noon
And blushing beamy eve, the twilight blends
With night's dark shade, shall sit and rove
with thee
In fancy o'er yon gleaming main. Wilt thou
As fondly think of me?”

“Think of thee—yes!”

Rafael with manly zeal replied; “ne'er could

I forget the light that beams so pure within
Thy true heart's diadem. On me thou canst
Rely. All tempting smiles I shall unheed;
Aye, firm and true I'll be to thee! Where'er
I may be,—cast upon far distant strands,
Among the rich and low, the high, the great,
Or scaling unfrequented Alps of snow,
Or clamb'ring steeps of mountains drear, or
swelt'ring
'Neath a torrid zone on Afric's burning sands,—
Unmindful of fatigue, I'll think of thee.

“In eager chase of foes upon the main,
Sweet thoughts of thee, Morena dear, will rise:
When tempests howl, amid the darkest hour
Of night, thou in the rayless gloom wilt, like
A specter, haunt my brain; and when my bark
In calms serene on ocean's stilly bed
Doth rest, thy image fond in fancy's beam
Will shine as clear and fair as now thou art

Before my eyes in day's bright gleam enwrap.

“ Or if, perchance, I'm on a sea of ice,
Beneath a cold moon sleeping fast, there still
My dreams with happy visions of thee will
Be fill'd ; aye, even when I'm kneeling down,
Communing with my God, a spirit sweet
Thro' nightly shades, to hear my prayer, thou'lt
come.”

This said, Morena raised from Rafael's breast
Her head, and, gazing in his bright dark eye,
She naught but pure, unsullied honor saw
There, scorning every thought of love forlorn
And breach of nuptial vow.

“ Dear Rafael, go,”

She said, “ where ocean's waves expand, and seek
New honors for thy manly brow ; and may
God waft thee safely o'er the deep, again,
To me : till then, in thought, thy image,
Rafael, I shall trace upon thy journeyings.”

Just then, wrapt in the trailing shadow of
A cloud fast rolling 'neath the glancing sun,
Don Pedro, treading deep the sinking sands,
With stately step the spot approach'd where stood
The parting lovers, lispings soft and low,
'Twixt earth and sky, their hopes and fears.

“May God
The billows smooth, brave boy, when fast thy bark
Is plunging o'er the raging sea; and winds
Propitious waft thee and thy comrades brave,
Again to fair Sonora's strand,” he said.

“For thy good wishes, Señor, pray accept
My grateful thanks,” then Rafael, bowing, said.
“I leave my much-loved object to thy care:
Señor, guard well thy trust; for she, alone,
Is the sole pride and glory of my life.”

“I shall with fond paternal care, my friend,
Guard well my child. What says Morena, eh?”
A passionate kiss was her fond answer.

So then the hour of parting came; the god
Of light shone half the day; all prest in turn
Our hero's hand. All said, "God save and speed
Thee on thy briny way!"

Then Rafael to
His panting heart Morena drew. They kiss'd,
Embraced, shook hands, and in their parting sighs
Each bade to each "farewell!"

Then eagerly forth
He from her folding arms withdrew, and sprang,
With hasty step and firm, a slanting plank
That bridged the yawl-boat there from beach to
wave.

Just where Morena stood in grief to catch
His parting breath, a score of throats rang out,
"A safe return to Rafael brave!"

This heard,
He answered back, "Good-bye!" Then to himself
He bade a long adieu!

The yawl-boat stanch,
By nimble oars plied, on swiftly skipt
Across the rough waves' crest to where the bark
Then darkly on the brine lay moor'd.

There soon

Our hero, like a scepter'd chief, upon
Her cleanly deck stood high among his crew,
All tough as steel, with features rough and tan'd
By the briny winds of many a sea.

So while the seamen scan'd, from head to foot,
Brave Rafael's manly form, and saw how much
It tallied with his inborn worth, they all,
Amid their admiration, wonder'd why
His usual buoyant spirits were o'ercast
By grief or sorrow strange, to them unknown,
Down pressing on his heart.

But brief the time
Of their surmise ; for soon he bid his tars
Unbend the sails. " The anchor weigh," he cried ;

Then near the capstan, where he stood absorb'd
In thought, he heaved a sigh for her he left
Upon the shore, there lingering yet enthrall'd
With hope, love, fear.

“The anchor’s hoisted,”
Loud the boatswain cried; yet Rafael stood
unmoved.

“Señor, the anchor’s on the deck and lash’d.”
“All right, Juan.”

Then, smiling to himself,
He said: “What mawkish mood is this I’m in,
Now making me seem so foolish here
On deck before my men? I’ll shake it off.
'Tis a woman’s weakness thus to indulge
In hopeless love; what! I, a warlike chief,
Turn’d god of doleful sighs! ‘Pshaw!”

“Juan,”
He cried. “Aye, aye, sir!”—“Hoist the sails;
first raise

The jib ; then cleat the halliards taut, and
westward

Wear the bark from shore away."

Soon the wind

Abeam her spreading sails fill'd full and urged
Her swift keel onward thro' the trackless deep.

So, meantime, Rafael near the taffrail stood
Glancing along the vessel's foamy wake,
And thought, as there he stood and gazed upon
His native headlands dim and fast receding
From his view, if fate would condescend
To grant the full enjoyment of his wish :
High warlike fame achieve, and live to hear it
Thro' the wide world spread, with her his bride,
Morena fair, with ample dower enrich'd,
Who there alone, that moment stood upon
The shore, watching in the haze of ocean far
The bark then speeding on its watery way ;
Hoping God would all the rude winds temper

And save it from the rocks which treacherous lurk
In ambush briny 'neath the wave; as she
Herself resign'd to fate, her lot would bear
And cherish grief, unheeding every thing
Save Rafael's last fond word "adieu."



CHAPTER IV.

Now one there was, with heart of base deceit,
Who well could act the two-faced part of friend
And foe, for fair and foul were both alike
To him who would, his selfish ends to gain,

Assume the fairest garb of friendliness ;
Approach you with a most complacent smile ;
Affect in thy welfare an interest deep,
To sound the secrets you might know
Concerning those whose confidence you'd gain'd ;
So he, the trafficker in slander base,
Could vilify the innocent and hold
The honest and true-hearted up to shame.

Therefore, this crafty knave, with artifice
And subtle ways of scheming base, did try
To rope into Don Pedro's confidence ;
For he, the sneaking skulk, from day to day,
Went nosing round the old man's place to spot
And foist pretended wealth and honor'd birth
About his graceless self. So there, one day,
Believing he Don Pedro's good-will gain'd,
Essay'd to win his daughter over
To his side by mild attentions made with
Gifts, and words of prosy tongue—aye, practiced

All his arts insidious so that he could
Bend her mind to think of him, and thereby
O'er her weak, confiding nature triumph.

But thro' his thin disguise Morena saw.
Her quick discernment read the villain's heart;
For well she saw his hidden craft within;
Nor could he with his wiles her reason blind.

Yet with his mind that deeply work'd in darkness,
Often he with diligence would watch the time
And place where she would slow and thoughtful
walk,

To meet as if by chance and greet her with
A smile, prelusive to the specious tale
Of wily sophistry so sleek, he wish'd
To breathe into her ear. But him she'd pass
Disdainful by, nor condescended once
To fix upon his low and sensual phiz
A gaze. These slights were sharp as poniards;

They in his heart the jealous passion wrought.
So with his mind by dark designs replete,
The dastard hit upon a scheme to act
The shyster's part, apparently of friend,
Sincere of course in thy behalf, yet hints
Of secrets in the past forgotten quite,
Lest if they were exhumed, they might disgrace
A good man's name. 'Twas thus the schemer
plan'd
To levy *black-mail* from Don Pedro.

So with the Don one day conversing, he
The parasite would now and then throw out
A hint of what he thought he knew, but gave
No word direct. Now, Don Pedro mark'd the drift
In which the fellow's conversation ran,
And so made bold to ask him what he meant;
But then the coward, quite reluctant, smooth'd
His hints and inuendoes over with
Evasive answers soft.

“Thy talk is strange!

Thy answers stranger yet! Why intimate?

What do you mean? Speak out. What foibles am
I guilty of to fear or tribute give

To hush a tattler’s tongue?” Don Pedro said.

“The recompense alone I’ll name, that seals

My lip in secrecy, and thou as brief

With thy response must be,” the leech replied.

“Then out with it. I’m a man of few words,”

Don Pedro firmly said. “Come, what would you

Have me do? Speak out.

“’Tis well,” the sneak rejoined;

“My terms are, that, unless thy daughter’s hand,

With ample fortune too, be mine, forthwith

I’ll now myself, post-haste, away and tell

With my own tongue thy plans and league of foes

Which thou defiantly hath raised against

His august majesty, to whom I’ve sworn

Allegiance.”

As if thunderstruck, awhile
Don Pedro sat amazed; then anger'd, he
The sycophant, with scowling brow survey'd,
And hurl'd at him his wrath for hatching
In his brain foul treason 'gainst the state, then
said:

“ Begone, base, servile wretch, begone! Thou
traitor!

I thy warning scorn; thy calumny resent:
None but a low-born, cringing whelp would raise
With shameful hand the venal sword against
The land that gave him birth. Hence, vile tool,
and do

Thy worst. In vice thou'rt harden'd. Renew'd
crimes

Become more heinous than the last. New crimes
Come after those that meet success; but thine,
From this time forth, shall be short-lived. Away!”

Then black despair the traitor's bosom rack'd;

He saw no comfort in the world, for hope
Of better luck had fled his madden'd brain.
So thoughts of crime ran thro' his mind. "What
shall

I do," he'd say, "to ease my frenzied soul?
I feel the brand of Cain upon my brow.
Shall I roam the world's wide scope in quest
Of peace, or here remain and fill my mind
With phantoms of revenge?"

But, while thinking
O'er his chequer'd fortune lost the alcalde,
With retainers came and bound in fetters strong
The renegade.

In prison, then, he took
An oath his days should there be few, for free
He'd be or forfeit life.

So there in jail,
Shut from day's cheering beam, a smile ironic
Oft he fix'd upon the links his wrist
Opprest; and so, by stroke of stratagem,

He many an hour would rasp his chains,
Until, at last, he burst his yoke and gain'd
At dead of night his freedom sweet.

Then quickly on thro' many a tortuous path
He sped o'er hill and forest thro', when night,
With dusky robe, a moonless sky enwrap't,
Until one day he reach'd imperial ground.

“Who, without speech or call, comes here?” the
guard
Exclaimed. “No further move. Thy mission?
Speak.”

“The news I bear is not for thee; none save
His majesty shall know. With him I wish
To speak; therefore, under guard escort,
Me to the regal hall where he doth sit.”

“As thy anxious look is voucher to thy tongue,

The privilege is thine; so come this way;
I will direct," the sentinel replied.

Soon face to face the cringing traitor stood
Before the Archduke Maximilian, who,
In all his august pride erect there sat,
By trophies of war and art surrounded;
And him in fair pretense of comely guise,
The renegade address'd :

"Peace to thy reign,
Most worthy prince. I'm from Sonora come—
A loyal subject of thy majesty—
To warn thee 'gainst a lawless crowd of foes
Who there with swelling clamor make the hills
And valleys ring with vile abuse and threats
Against thy life and throne."

So, hearing this,
Max in derision smiled, and said: "Ugh! 'bribes!
Threats! torments! tyrants! On bloody trophies
gluts!

We'll load him down with chains; no mercy have!—

His soul's as black as hell!—A prodigal
Of guilt!—His bosom's harden'd; his breast hath
Never heaved a sigh!—His hour hath come!—We'll
Crush his haughty soul!—With his tott'ring throne,
We'll raze his palace on his sinful head!—
All such invectives vile are quite familiar
To my ear; yet they nothing in me raise
But damn'd contempt; they're but a waste of breath;
The drunken spleen of scribbling pharisees.”

“They now,” the traitor said, “in legions swarm
The hills and coast, all arm'd and resolute
For war; furious all for blood and plunder,
By Don Pedro's boastful breath incited,
For to vindicate, they say, their laws.”

“Then

We must stop the treason of Don Pedro,”
Maximilian answered. “Are you skill'd in war?”
Max said.

“I am in frontier warfare used;
I shall a prudent, watchful leader prove,”

The renegade replied ; for then he felt
No other joy so great as waging war
Against his kith and kin, with whom he'd have
No mercy in his train.

Then, soon amid

A group of native hirelings, Maximilian sat ;
They, for state preferment got, did serve him well ;
But two assembled high above the rest,
Ministers of war and state, glittering in
Their own esteem and worth, whose minds matured
By years, did teem with wisdom and affairs
Of state, soon caught in Maximilian's eye
Bad tidings half reveal'd. So they, to glean
The thoughts which then the monarch's mind
perplex'd,
Approach'd, obsequiously, their reigning prince,
Who bow'd responsively, and thus proclaim'd
His views :

“ My friends, a messenger hath come
With news that nearly all my subjects in

Sonora now are up in arms, equip'd
And well commanded by a chief who doth
Deny my kingly power, nor homage pay
My crown. 'Tis the disloyal work, he says,
Of an old man, Don Pedro, whom my bribes
And promises, disdaining yet, still find
No entrance to his heart, but makes
With brandish'd arms a martial show against
My right to rule Sonora's hills so green.
What's best to do?"

“ Be cautious whom you trust,”
One said. “ These realms are, your highness, fill'd
With spies. The weapons which thy grace
wouldst lend
To quell the rash insurgents might be used
Against thy crown, for treachery lurketh oft
In breasts obtrusive here.”

“ Besides, who knows,”
Another said, “ but he may be a spy
Sent here to sound the court? Therefore, your grace,

Let weightier thoughts thy mind engage ; but yet,
Where is the man, your majesty, who deems
Himself so brave ?”

“He yonder sits,” Max said.

Then with a searching eye the speaker read
The traitor through, and thus to Max resumed :

“In him we can’t confide ; preferment give
To noble men. He’s some dull fool who would
Obtrude his worthless talents on the great—
A lout, perchance, just fit to drive stray cattle
To a pound. Yet stay ; if his brow that frowns
Austere, does not misgive, a recreant knave
He is, to vice and guilt inured, and ripe,
E’en now, for any mode of warfare bold
Among Sonora’s hills ; for no remorse
Subdues such men. Their guilt accumulates ;
No fear can swerve when darkness lowers to urge
Them on their wayward course ; therefore, he’ll
serve

Our purpose well. So bid him muster force
To wage guerrilla warfare on our foes."

Then Maximilian said: "Thou art, my friend,
Commissioned. Go and raise a squad of men;
Speed and organize to quell, as best you can,
The traitor foe in arms against my crown."

At this, the rebel bow'd his thankful head,
And said: "I shall, your majesty, obey
The mandate of thy will." Then, turning, took
His way at evening when the sun went down
In purple splendor; often muttering
To himself: "Now storms of wrath impend o'er
Thee and thine, Don Pedro. A thousand bolts
Shall fall and shake with dread thy haughty soul,
And hers also, whom I with confidence
Hath oft addrest. So time roll on; speed me
To my victim. Anger steels my courage
To revenge."



CHAPTER V.

WHEN his own native land disappear'd from
His view, aloft brave Rafael turn'd his eye
And gayly there from mizzen peak beheld
High waving in the breeze of ocean fair
The flag 'neath which he hoped to live or fall.

So hourly, with an eye that seldom slept,
He'd watch the horizon to catch each sail,
Which rose and plough'd with cleaving keel the sea;
For unremittingly he long'd both night
And day to meet the foes of freedom fair.

At length, far looming on the wave, his eye
Descried a cruiser boldly bearing down
Toward his bark. With transport high, this fired
Bold Rafael's heart; for he thro' telescope
Observed that from the stranger's deck, aloft
The Frenchman's tri-barr'd ensign ran.

So, then,

Raf. beckon'd to his crew, and said: "I have
At last descried the often sought-for prey,
For yonder on the misty line, hull down,
Ye can, with naked eye, discern a ship
This way fast the ocean tide-wave cleaving,
Flying aloft the flag of haughty France."

This news in all the crew fierce courage roused;

Their voices rose in exultations loud
And long: "We shall oppose, attack, tear down
That haughty symbol of the usurper."
"Yes," said Rafael, "if they dare to fight, we
shall

Oppose them till the waves on which they glide
Are purpled with their blood; but in our hearts
Let justice be. No man with soul humane
Will draw his sword upon a foe when down;
He lets the wounded live. Therefore, tho' theirs
Be blood, oppression, sin, still let *our* motto
Be, "Sweet Justice, God, and Liberty!"
Freedom hath a dwelling-place in heaven;
There our king is God, and Him we all adore.
Those who fight and fall in freedom's cause He
crowns
With martyrdom.

"So now, my heroes, all
For valor justly famed, be resolute,
Be brave; once more thy vaunted skill exert,

And gain in contest fierce new wreathlets
For thy brows. Let each man to his post repair."

They done as bid, for every one approved
The captain's words, and pledged their solemn
oaths

The Gallic foe to fight or meet his doom ;
For on that deck there were no shuddering hearts.

So, o'er the foaming deep the Frenchman surged,
But not obedient to bold Rafael's signal
Of surrender, as the Gaul with bold heart swore
He ne'er would yield to prowling pirate bold,
Nor budge an inch until compell'd by force
Of arms and men more valiant than his own
To haul his sovereign's standard down, and said
Unto his men, that he who flinch'd would be
His foe, for naught but valor should decide
The contest.

Then soon upon the turgid wave
The fight began. A flash, like lightning swift,

Volumes of smoke from roaring cannon fierce,
Missiles of death from ship to ship were hurl'd
Across the troubled waters dancing then
In all their frantic glee of splash and dirge
To the mad antics of the blood-red fiends
Upon the waves.

While there, all courage firm,
Bold Rafael, like a valiant god of war,
Amid his crew, in all his valor shone.
From deck he fearless watch'd the foremost lines
Of the contest ; and mingled with the war
Of thund'ring volleys whizzing, full hours four
From ship to ship, his voice of dire command.

So, too, the Frenchman, strong and stubborn, well
The brunt of battle bore, unswerving yet,
With vengeance in his bosom burning, till
His ship in flames from Rafael's shot was doom'd ;
For then a broadside most tremendous smote
His craft and made him haul his ensign down,
And stay the scourge of blood.

Then loud hurrahs
From Rafael's men were heard. Soon on the deck,
Among the vanquish'd dead, the victors trod.

Ah, what a sight for eyes unused to tears,
For hearts an hour before no mercy moved!
There pity from soft feelings sweet arose,
And mingled with the dying groan of foes
Who went, ere long, down with the shatter'd hulk
Unto their watery graves below.

'Twas thus brave
Rafael humbled Gallia's haughty crest.
The triumph fill'd his soul with pride. It was
His proudest hour of life.

So when the ship
Of France had sunk into the mighty deep,
Our Rafael bade his vessel's decks be clear'd
Of tackling broken, splints of spars, and all
The foul debris of naval war, to tempt
With dauntless soul once more the sea, and still

Maintain the honor of his suffering land.

Then soon the cruiser felt the breeze and flew

Across the sea. But mark the sun ; how changed

The glare ! it glimmer'd with malignant light,

As down behind a lurid cloud it sank,—

Dread omen of the storm-king's wrath !

“ There's

Trouble in that sky,” the boatswain said ;

“ Aye, the sky in frightful aspect on us frowns.”

“ It's awful black,” Rafael replied. “ Down sail,

And furl all fast !”

Commotion then ensued :

The billows from their watery bed awoke ;

At twilight hour the howling wind scream'd forth

Thro' tackle and thro' shroud ; while headlong o'er

Huge foamy steeps of brine, the cruiser plunged

And roll'd from side to side, as if a cork

She was by tempest tost upon the wave.

Yet on before the blast she sped. Her masts,

Like weak reeds in a light breeze bent ; but soon

The strain and torture of the simoon's force,
Her mizzen sprung; and headlong crashing down,
Like thunder from a cloud, on deck it fell.

Now all seem'd hopeless, all seem'd lost. A cry
From some despairing soul on board was heard
Amid the crash, that death was on the billow.
"Breakers! rocks! I see their jutting forms ahead,"
The watch with terror shriek'd.

All shook with fright,

All, thro' the dreary, darksome void, observed
The black'ning rocks, so grim and hideous, stand
Like spectral ghosts along the shore, where loud
And long the wild, tumultuous surges broke.
All saw the bark was doom'd, that soon she'd
strike

The flinty headland, dark and grim;
For then, unmindful of her guiding helm,
She the fated craft with rapid speed did
Wildly from her wonted course drift. A crash

Was heard—she struck—her knotted knees were
rent

From stem to stern ; the waves across her decks
A clean breach made. She split in two, and all
Down in the ocean sank, save one poor soul,
Whose voice amid the deaf'ning blast was heard :
“ I'm lost, I'm lost ! Oh, help me heaven, ere
I sink down in the ocean's dark abyss ! ”

Yet still the drowning man himself did brace
With vigor firm and stem'd with straining breast
A ridging swell that surged against a rock
On him its blackest pinion frowning.
Thrice three times he gave a lurch to clutch it,
But thrice three times the effort fail'd. Him back
The curving billows drew. Oh, what moments
Fraught with fear ! Hope fled his heart ! his
breathing
Soon came quick and short ! He thought his
hour

Had come ! his life from earth would be soon
gone !

For then a drowning man he was, 'tween
Life and death upon the briny balance sway'd.

•

But fear of sinking to a watery grave
Doth strength impart to drowning men ; and so,
On the engulphing flood once more he stem'd
With panting breast the waves, and 'caught at
last,

In his firm grip, a shelving ledge of rock
Which Rafael, wet and chill'd by the cold sea,
In all his sternest vigor scaled.

Then soon

A wave-worn nook he reach'd, and there inlodged,
Benumb'd and famish'd thro' that dreary night
Of gloom, of storm, and rain, an eye intent
He kept upon the sea and sky, to catch
The glimmering streak of dawn rise on the
deep.

So there, forlorn and sad, like one of life
Grown tired when all looks dark and cheerless in
The world, upon the rocky brink he sat,
Hoping the roaring wind would tear away
The frowning front of clouds which pall'd the
night

In dismal gloom, to let the stars reflect
Their silvery rays upon that awful scene.

“ Oh! I deplore this stroke of fate, the loss
Of all my well-earn'd trophies too. Alas!
I fear I am alone upon this rock ;
For 'neath this arch no echoes sad I hear
Of human voice distress'd. Upon the blast,
From drowning throats no cries despairing come.
If any rise, unheard they float upon
The deaf'ning wind, and hush'd are they to me.”

Then Compassion, supreme of soul, invok'd
The tear to gleam in Rafael's eye ; for then



He fear'd his men had sunk to ocean's depths;
But hoping that the morning would reveal
A brighter promise of their secret fates,
For God, he felt, would smooth the troubled sea
To rest.

But when the dawn its gray advancement
Spread across the gloomy wilderness

Of water wide, no crew, nor fragment of the hull,
Near where he stood, marking with a pensive eye
The fatal spot; nor yet no sign of raft,
Nor castaway lash'd to a spar he traced
Thro' weary miles along the broad highway
Of ocean vast.

“Poor shipwreck'd souls!” he sigh'd.
“Lost, forever lost! all drown'd are in the sea!
Away from thy own native land, and those
Loved ones who live on, hoping yet to see
Thee back again! Ah! little do they know
Thy final task on earth's complete! thy hands
From mortal strife are freed! thy souls have soar'd
Above to far more happy shores! But oh,
What anguish will their hearts afflict, when they
The dreadful news do learn that thou art drown'd!
It may in them fair nature's course convulse;
To wrap their corpse also in the cold earth,
From whence their souls, being cleansed from
earthly sin,

Would rise to God's bright throne, and there
with thee
In bliss divine, enjoy eternity.

"Ah, comrades brave, alas! I can not help
Think of thy fate. Oh, let thy conscious
spirits

Blame not me. 'Twas not my fault, I vow;
It was the victor Death that trod the gale,
And bade the winds and treach'rous waves
conspire

To drive my bark against these rocks; yet there,
Down in thy ocean graves in peace repose:
From earthly toil secure, sweet be thy sleep!"

Then Rafael, comfortless yet, slowly quit
The fatal rock on which he'd lonely sat,
To search the dreary isle for food and drink
His famish'd stomach craved.

So, mournfully
There along a stretch of beach unbroken quite

With ridge of rock, with inlets, bays, Rafael
Wander'd sadly, sighing now and then
An answering cadence from his doleful heart
Unto the solemn requiem of the wave,
Borne by the breeze of the sea to his feet.

Then there he linger'd on the shore and scan'd
With straining eye the sea afar; and while
He gazed upon the flood, a yearning fond
Crept in his heart of home and friends beloved
Who dwelt across unnumber'd leagues of brine,
Upon an eastern shore far out beyond
The roseate beam of morn then quivering
On the deep as far as the eye could see.

“ Ah, yes!” he sigh'd, “ my vivid fancy paints,
In visionary tints, as pure and clear
As doth the sun yon shadowy mist
Of morn with mellow light, thy image still;
For here alone upon a barren shore,

An outcast made by hapless fate I stand
Entranced in dalliance with an ideal
That makes its charming way up from my heart,
And bids my duteous tongue pronounce thy name,
—Morena dear.

“Ah, love! yet tho’ I’m gazing
O’er an ocean wide which keeps me from thee
Many miles apart, beholding nothing
But a sky of golden hues, and a sea
Of greenish shade, my fond eyes turn to thee;
In rapt imagination now I kiss
Thy vision with my breath all charged with sighs
Which at thy bidding from my inmost soul
Ooze forth.

“Ah, yes, sweet love! thy image still
Is scepter’d in my mind, where thou doth like
An angel come and waft about on wings
As lightsome as the silvery mist diffused
On earth at night from starry zones.

“O thou
Bright sun, draw from the eyes of her who far
Away from this lone isle doth dwell in all
Her maiden prime so fair, reflection's power,
And dart, as thou the morning light in from
The ruddy east, their glances down on me !

“I'm sure the glim'ring softness in the eyes
Of her who oft beneath the mango's shade
With me hath sat, and loiter'd in the grots
And bowery groves of Montezuma's land,
Till evening dew had spangled her dark hair,
My darken'd soul would lighten now and tell
Me with their soft electric flashes fond, to live
On, hoping still to see my love's first choice,
My dearest friend, my soul's companion.

“But now, perchance, in faded charms, Morena
Doth on yon far continent despairingly
A pensive specter lonely stand upon

A cliff down by the sea, thro' cloud, thro' rain,
Thro' sun and storm, from rosy light of morn
Till twilight hour, here breathing her sighs from
Cliff to crag, from hill to hill, awaiting
My return, and chiding, tho' with temp'rate
 breath,
All adverse winds for keeping me so long
Away from her sweet self.

 "Or yet, in groves
Where warbling song-birds blithe their notes
 do trill
Responsive cadence to the liquid tones
Of babbling rills, she wanders on, with harp
In hand, or lingers 'neath a canopy
Of vine in bloom, all in the dewy light
Of eve, attuning sadly mournful strains
That rise in echoes plaintive 'mong the leaves.
"But stay; I could go on romancing thus
From now thro' winter drear until the spring
Diffusive comes enrobed in gayest green;

But now, upon this barren isle, remote
From home, from friends, what will become
of me,

Fast doom'd to hunger's slow decay? Alas!
No hope, sweet wine of life! I feel to give
My poor despairing bosom warmth, nor food,
I fear, to stay life's swift receding tide!"

Then Rafael landward turn'd his face, and took
With feeble step a rugged path to seek
Some spot, some habitation find where he
Might get the needful food and drink to stay,
Ere he a famish'd wretch should sink to death
In manhood's prime, the pangs of hunger which
Then at his vitals gnaw'd.

So, on he roam'd

Six tedious hours by mortal eye unseen;
Yet hopeless still of succor, Rafael search'd
The land: all was a scene of woe—a wild,
Where mortal man ne'er seem'd to dwell.

Yet on

Thro' wild romantic cliffs and paths aslant
Huge gorges steep, where horrid sounds below
Gave token of the lurid haunt of owls
And lair of sprites, he held his tortuous way,
Until the sun declined and purpled all
The landscape round. Then twilight came, and
night

With dusky mantle wrapt the scene in gloom ;
Still Rafael's wishes yet were unfulfill'd.

So Rafael, weary, feeble, hopeless, sat
Him down to count with frantic mind the fate
Of one yet unprepared to bid the world
Adieu ; and brooding on the sullen moan
Of the night-wind, exclaim'd :

“How sad I feel !

My buoyant heart's gone down. All hope is lost ;
For here no herds do browse, nor mortal kind
Abide. O Heaven ! hear my prayer, and deign



Thy aid! Oh, send this wretched I unknown
From this uncultured isle to scenes less wild,
If needs to my own native home, where I
Was blest with health and ease, ere war with
sword

Unsheathed, brought death and desolation there

Where Independence dwelt and Liberty
Was ours !

“ Ah ! well will the usurper smile
When he doth learn my life's proud aims
are lost,
And doom'd am I to wear no laurel wreath
Of fame so proudly earn'd where glory leads
The patriot to maintain his peaceful state,
And freedom of the hills, the fields, and groves
He loves : all these have I resign'd to be,
Alas ! by cruel fate condemn'd to pine
Upon this dreary isle 'mid barren wastes,
Regretting all things else save the pure love
That hath become my bosom's pain !

“ If, then,
'Tis fate's decree that I should here submissive
Die a wither'd wretch, oh ! let my soul
In calmness now depart. The time is fix'd
For mortals to respire the breath of heaven.
Extinction's got to come at last ; for death

Among the living stealthy stalks around,
And conquers all."

Just then, in wonderment
He starts! His eye, athwart the darksome shade
Discern'd a mystic form in white enrobed,
Ascending from a gloomy grot below.
Like a being meek, of some superior mold,
On it slowly came and stood before
His dreamy eyes.

Awe-struck, he stood amazed!
Conflicting thoughts then fill'd his mind,—hope,
Wonder, fear.

He then, upon his knees,
With hands upon his bosom cross'd, exclaim'd:
"What phantom's this, as bright as looks the
moon,
Or like a radiant star in heaven gleaming
On the dusky landscape round? What succor
Bringeth thou, fair image from all ruling power?
What miracle to work of heaven, oh, say!
E'en now, when elfin sprites the broad day shun,

But who at night come forth from mazy depths
Of earth to stain their hands in crime, and like
The ray'nous vulture, gorge themselves with blood
Of man ! Oh, speak ! hath Providence thus deign'd
To send an angel from above to save
Me from impending fate, and gladden with
Thy friendship my sad heart ? Yea, surely thou
Hast on a mission merciful come down
From some abode of light with blessings meant
To cheer my too despairing heart !

“ Now speak,
O fabulous being ! speak the tidings
Which thy bosom doth conceal ! Art thou here
From fairy bowers or ocean's coral caves ?
What is thy wish ? Oh, answer me ! speak out,
And let me know who hath in mercy heard
My murmuring heart and quickly hither come
My sufferings to assuage ! ”

“ Weary of soul !
O withering fragment of majestic man,

But yet most perfect of creation's sons,
Half dead upon the cold, damp ground, the cries
Which thou with bosom torn by wild despair
Hath plaintive from thy doleful voice poured
forth

Upon the moaning wind of night, hath here
Me drawn to thee from my abode to soothe
With cheering breath the anguish of thy soul,
And in thy heart the fire of love enkindle!

"Therefore, oh, cease to mourn! Fear not; I am
No spirit of enchanted bowers come here,
My friend, to haunt thee in the dead of night;
Nor yet am I by death commission'd
To abridge thy breathing span of life.
Thy friend I am, and more than friend will be
If thou'lt unite a constant heart with mine.
So now arise; come with me to my home,—
A fair estate, befitting one of rank,
Built on a wild domain, where thou canst eat,

Drink, sleep, and surfeit on rich rural sweets :
On flesh of deer, that browse in herds upon
My fertile plains and fatten on the grass
Of autumn ; or yet thy appetite appease
On fishes scaly, glittering silvery white,
With speckles tinted golden, 'neath the whirls
Of gurgling brooks that leap from rock to rock
In crystal cascades bright. Besides all this,
O stranger, there thou'lt find a pleasure for
Each sense : thy ear, the tuneful note of birds ;
Thy smell, a thousand blooming flowers ; thy taste,
Ambrosial juice by solar heat distill'd ;
Thy eyes, with faces strange and picturesque ;
Thy lips, with kisses tender, sweet, and pure
From holy love that links two hearts and fills
The bosom full of sighs !

“Come, now, stranger,
Come and hasten with me from these solitudes.
I'll guide thee to my rustic mansion, where
With me in studious silence thou canst dwell.”

“Thy sympathy, fair one, my heart hath touch’d:
Thy words of love new hope that I shall live;
But yet if thou from necromantic bowers
Hath come with sophistry to play me false,
Then I prefer to languish here and perish
In these solitudes.”

“Doubt me not,” she said.

“If I with motives false hath hither come
To lure thy wand’ring steps and fancy cheat,
May death e’en now curtail my breathing hours!”

“Enough,” Rafael replied. “I’ll go.”

“Then lay
Thy hand in mine,” she said, “that I may raise
Thee off the ground.”—“’Tis well; advance,” he
said.



CHAPTER VI.

HATH love despairing changed Morena so,
Since Rafael crowded sail upon his bark,
And in the misty gray of ocean, onward
Like a sea-bird flew, far out on the dim waste

Of brine, beyond her tearful sight? Why hath
Absence touch'd her tender heart so hopeful,
Since daring Rafael brave, went forth and left
The Spanish maiden fair in beauty's pride?

Alas! for her, before that day had drawn
Its light from land and sea, pale grief began
Its blighting with her olive cheek so fair!

Like frost from icy poles blown south to nip
The tender buds that from their vernal cells
Peep forth to kiss the early flush of spring,
So fear, as biting, came into her breast
So warm, and chill'd her young heart's glowing fire:
For oft she wonder'd why her lover tarried
Listlessly, unsated with the freedom
Of the seas; or yet, perchance, she thought
His bark against a rock had split in two,
And he, poor soul, had with it sunk upon
The ocean floor, near where vile lobsters creep.

The soft and silent light that sadly shone
In her dim eye, too plainly told the tale
Of racking thoughts and dreams of wild unrest,
Both night and day, her heart and mind
distracting.

“Ah, here, alas!” she sigh’d, “I count the hours,
The days, the weeks; but yet to me the hours
Seem days, the days seem weeks, and weeks seem
months:

For hourly, daily, my fond thoughts revert
To time long past, when Rafael, ’neath this porch,
Would sit from noon to set of sun, from rise
To wane of moon, with me his dear, and breathe
Out blissful tones of love most passionate,
Most true!

“But now, alas! it seems that all
Those joys were but illusive, and as fleeting
As the moments bright that fly like clouds
In moonshine from a lover’s sight away
Thro’ space, and casting down upon the earth,

As onward they in curling freedom roll,
Shadows dismal in their trail, remindful
Of what darksome scenes thro' life may come.

“Ah, Rafael! once thou wert the sun that shed
A mantling ray of friendly warmth and love
On my poor heart, so broke and chill'd by frost
Of absence cold; but yet, if thou wert here,
Thy presence would destroy the canker-worm
Of care that gnaws my drooping life away;
Aye, be my blissful antidote of woe;
My sallow cheek with vital rouge bespread,
And make my heart again leap high with joy
In loving warmth to mount in luster there,
And to the world proclaim how Death for once
Had been deprived of me in maidenhood,
For whom he had the silent bier prepared.

“Oh, would to God thy work were done, and thou
All safe to me return'd across the main!

How quick my own would beat to press the
heart

That I love of my sweet Rafael dear
Who hath flown from my side o'er the waves
Far away! But I fear such hopes are vain,
For he, by war's imperious mandate dread,
Hath from my side been call'd to scour the deep
In search of foes, and leave his lady-love
Neglected here alone, annoy'd by those
Who hate him for his love of me!

“Ah, grief

Is mine! Nothing here can soothe me: nor tones
Of melting music fond, nor friendship's joys!
All indifferent are and vain to cheer me.
For when among the proud and great I sit,
Or with the gay and thoughtless mingle,
Thy manly form and graceful air, Rafael,
Still looms up in my mind in retrospect
Admiringly, for none there are but I
Who doth imagine what mishap betides thee,

And none but I who doth so deeply feel
Thy loss!

“ Ah me! how vain another one
My love may emulate, as none can feel
Fond absent love-pangs half so keenly, nor,
I’m sure, with the same force can feel such aches
As throb the livelong day at my sad heart.

“ Ah, false he could not be! How pitiful
My lot, were I from him estranged! Ah, no!
This can not be; for the sweet tongue that pledged
Thro’ life its troth to me, now surely would not
Condescend love’s cadence soft to whisper
In a strange one’s ear. No, no; thy vignette
Is true voucher for the heart that murmur’d
Love at parting hour.

“ Now, come from my breast
Thou fac-simile of his own sweet self.
See how true to the life! Oh! I can’t refrain
From kissing thy sweet portraiture, brave Raf.;

Thy image doth charm me so ; thy face I love,
Revere ; it tells me that thy heart doth dwell
In faith's abiding-place—the lover's seat.

Yes, love, I'll hope. I press thee to my heart.
'Tis better that affection bringeth light
And joy, than foul suspicion darken worse
One's life. Aye, Rafael dear ! I've done thee
wrong,

Thy honest face a faithful heart portrays.
Oh, see his tresses dark as when the day
Hath lost its light, how coyly from his brow,
So smooth, they in their curling freedom revel !
While his eyes, so archly 'neath their lashes
Shaded, gleam as lustrous as twin stars do
In a summer's evening bright.

“ Oh, that face,

In pride of manliness how handsome !
Perfect as an artist could with pencil sketch !
Or charming nature mold with beauty's hand !
Now its loveliness no shade of sorrow mars ;

It wears the pleasing smile I oft hath seen,
When thou, dear youth, the friend and pride of all
Who knew thee, would approach with cheerful air
My father's halls when merry-making high
Around the social board would ring!

“Oh, why

Didst thou for distant seas their friendship shun,
And adverse tempests brave! Oh! 'twas cruel,
E'en sad, to have fled from the home of thy
fathers,

Leaving me desolate, quite broken-hearted!
Oh, confound the cause that sever'd thee from me,
And made the space that lies between each heart,
Meant only now to try thy love with mine!

But I'll

Be patient, Rafael dear, as something tells
Me we'll yet meet again; that brighter days
Are set apart for you and I to bask
Thro' all the hours which may hereafter roll
In sunny splendor o'er our heads. Yet p'rhaps

My woe in golden hopes I'm gilding,
For 'tis so strange that these few months of gloom
Hath all my bright days darken'd! Still, when I
pause,

I think how vain this maiden fantasy!
It seems like waking from a spell of death,
With mind unconscious still of things about
The world, ne'er heeding once how oft they come
Thro' ever-changing time, then go!

“But soft;

I dread to tell the tale that awes my breath,
Fearful lest the truth might pain! Yet, still why
doubt?

'Twere better, p'rhaps, that I *were* dead and laid
Down in earth's narrow cell, than hopeless pine
And murmur thus both night and day!

“Oh, fie!

What mean these tears I weep upon thy form,
Beloved of other days? Now enter thy case
Of pearl and gold, with velvet interlaced;

There in thy azure-tinted richness dwell.
I'll to the scenes of early days, among
Yon hills and rocks that skirt the sea.
The clouds do lightly pass beneath a sky
Of blue; the breeze doth murmur wildly sweet
This noon in from the ever-rolling sea, where,
Foaming the pebbly shore, its gleeful waves
To ocean's music move. There solace I
May find for my unhappy reverie."

Morena then, in woeful love absorb'd,
Her hand reach'd out and took a book of prayer;
Her lone heart's ease when fetter'd so with woe;
For as the days roll'd round on sunlit wheels
Of time, her matins to Almighty God
She with her sighs thro' lips commingled.

Then out, obedient to the chapel bell,
Forth from its belfry pealing tones to come
And offer up her daily prayer to Him,

Demure she walked along a narrow path
That widen'd to a broad and level way
Where stood the consecrated shrine to Christ.

Soon near the altar stone in special pew,
Devout, near other worshipers, she knelt.
The vail that hid her rueful face she raised,
And meekly fix'd her eyes upon the cross
Of Jesus blest, and Him adoring, bow'd.
Then oft the tumult of blest feelings
Bade her tongue speak out devotions to her God,
And vent in softest tones her thoughts sublime
Of him whose spirit next her God she loved.

There some relief this pious fervor gave
To her wrung heart, so hopeless then of bliss ;
For when her prayers were done, she rose from
Knees, devout and thankful, bow'd her sorrowing
head

“To God the Father, God the Son, and God
The Holy Ghost.”

This said, then down the aisle,
From out the holy shrine, she journey'd forth
Thro' paths that sloped to the broad sea.

Before

The pensive eyes of the lone maid, soon full
In view with pride, its placid bosom heaved.
Awhile in mournful gaze the surf she watch'd,
Which from the smiling green of ocean roll'd
In braids of misty brine along the shore.

Then from the ruffling waves so playful
In their foamy pride upon the glittering sands,
Her eyes she raised and measured with a glance,
From where she stood, the ocean round
To where it seem'd the verging sky to touch ;
But there upon her view no sail appear'd.

“ Ah ! who,” she sigh'd, “ can tell what evil there,
On yonder deep, which now so tranquilly
Reposeth, hath befallen my young man ?

Alas! upon its placid bosom oft
Much treachery there lurketh; for when it's by
A gentle whiff of wind awaken'd
From its briny slumber, it will murmur
First, then roar, then madly leapeth, ready
To engulph its victims in its mighty depths!

“O ocean dread! what means thy summer sighing
Which so dolefully doth in my ears ring
Complainings sadly sweet, perchance, of him?
Here, due west, I've seen thee five months, last
past,
Void of vessels bounding thy horizon dim.
Once thou wert to me romantic, charming;
But I feel that pleasure now no more; for
Those days hath come and flown when I would sit
Upon this rock and let thy gentle breeze
Thus gambol with my raven hair. Alas!
'Tis chiding now hath ta'en the place of
praising.

Oh, fie upon thy cruel winds that blew
Across thy depths my darling love from me!

“Oh, shame! what have I said? Forgive me; 'tis
My heart and not my temper that upbraids.
Yea, thou wilt safely homeward from thy tempests
Wing my Rafael back from sea. Canst tell me
Why he lingers? Oh, so long it seems since
He hath left me lonely! Alas! can death have
Claim'd him, say? I fear he hath been wreck'd
and thrown

A lifeless corpse on some wild desert shore;
For in my dreams one night methought I heard
Upon the wind his cry of wild despair,
As he, poor soul! immersed in the salt sea,
Did bravely grasp thy mad'ning waves for aid!”

This said, Morena paused. 'Twas then the hour
The glowing sun, far on its western course,
By slow degrees beneath the ocean verge,

Dipt down and quench'd its fiery beam, while
 bronzing

With its rays a crest of cloudlets high
Above Sonora's hills.

Then the evening dew
In glittering jets began to fall; and night
O'er earth and sea intrusive came, and wrapt
In faded tints of dying day, the maid
Whose fancy at that silent hour began
Illusive fears to shape.

So, with drooping head
And listless step, then homeward straightway
In the twilight from those scenes she wander'd.

Arrived, she took, as was her wont at eve,
When Venus brightly shone o'er bower and
 stream,
Her sweet guitar, whose dulcet strains she deem'd
Would solace bring to her distracted heart
And mind. Then looking up, she thus began:—

“ O lucid star of eve, I see thy glance
 Resplendent, beaming down on sea and plain,
And in thy sheen the sportive wavelets dance ;—
 Oh that thy gleam could brighten my dark brain !

“ Ah, pure, pale star, thou hast the benign power
 To shed a gleam o’er sorrow’s gloomiest hue ;
But thou this eve on me doth sickly lower,
 As if his loss also now grieveth you !

“ Even as the eye of him whom I deplore,
 Was my soul’s orb as lustrous as thy beam,
Oh, say ! hath gales adverse him toss’d ashore,
 Or sunk him ’neath the waves deep from thy gleam ?”

“ In vain you sigh for him whom hither oft
Thy kindness drew.”

 This hush’d her mournful strain ;
A thousand fears upon her features played.
Fright its pallor o’er her beauty cast.
She shook as if in icy fetters bound ;
Like falling stars, her eyes shot thro’ the gloom.
About she wildly stared. Whom did she see,
Vague, indistinct ? for there her keen eye scan’d

A form with hair and features that awoke
Upon her sight resemblance of a man.
Thrice three times she tried to speak, but could not,
Nor even stir from her soft-cushion'd seat.

At length alarm gave way. Her voice regain'd
Its speech; then with unfetter'd tongue she spoke:

“Who at this silent hour, when night enwraps
In sable folds of air both hill and dale
With darkling step, perchance from some foul den,
Into my room himself obtrudes? Hast thou
Come here a tale of grief to cite, or fear
To add to my sad heart now rack'd by dread
Of thee? I know not whom thou art! whence
from:

Perchance thou art some midnight imp who from
Dark haunts now prowleth round in guise thus
foul!”

Noiseless, then, the form glid nearer where she stood

“Keep back!” Morena cried. “Who art thou ?
speak

Thy wish ! Why standeth boldly there, as if
My life were now dependent on thy will ?
What wouldst thou ask ? What frantic deed
bent on ?

I know not what I’ve done that could offend
The Sovereign Judge of all, much less the whims
Of vain, perfidious man ! what law divine
Infringed, no mercy conscience could reclaim !”

“O thou capricious jade ! I’ll let thee know,
To thy regret, who makes thee quake with
fear !

Thou vain, inconstant one ! the first and last
To whisper to my heart, bright hopes that
raised

It soaring far on gracious wings to heaven,
And fill’d my bosom with that passion warm
Which yet torments me still !

“Ah! well mayst thou look
Distrustful on the face thou once admired!
I once thy lover was, thy dearest friend,
But now thy foe am I; for here I’ve come
To hurl thee from thy height of fancied bliss
With him my rival.”

“Art thou Gandora?”

“Yes, he am I, whom oft thou hast despised!
Ha! ha! this makes thee flutter like a frighten’d
bird

From ravenous hawk! Thy conscience fears
my wrath.

Nay, shrink not from me. I for many an hour,
With weary limbs, hath rugged paths traversed
To tell thee of the ills which my pain’d heart
Endures. A tale of wrong it is, whose venom now
Shall sting thy ears, and make with fright thy
tongue,

Ere thou can speak, cling to thy mouth. Now well
My story mark.

“ Tho’ I thro’ you hath been
Outlaw’d (thou know’st it well), yet I in morn
Of life serene, for honor and for deeds
Of virtue firm, did rank in name, in praise,
Distinction, with the noblest of mankind.
Those virtues from the purest source I drew,
Thro’ honesty and truth, whose streams glid by
In righteous ways of life to honor bright,
Until I hoped my sun of day would set
In heaven with thee, if fate so will’d that thou
Wouldst form thy nuptial yoke on earth with me !

“ Oh ! had it then the will of heaven been
That I by death had lost my fond heart’s choice,
I should then have been spared the license
Which I’ve used to harm my fellow-kind !

“ Ah, then
Thou wert transcendent,—aye, so chastely mild !
I wooed thee as the stars woo heaven ; for in
My gaze thou wert divine. No coolness then

I thought would quench my bosom's fire; for as
The ebb and flow of tides obey the moon,
So my heart's blood, unerringly, from day
To day by thee was moved to come and go,
Obedient to its joyful measure.

“’Twas then you heard with willing ears my
vows,

And wreathed in smiles thy lips that gave assent
Of faith, of heart, of hand. This gave me
hope

That you and I together, hand in hand,
Would gladly roam united mates thro' life,
As I the vows you pledged alone
Preferr'd; but thou, whom I loved more than life
Itself, did make a vile return for those
To thee I gave! O thou base perjurer
Of oaths! I swear mine was an honest love!

“But soon you cast a longing eye on one

Who had more wealth but far less heart
than me;

For then I saw by slow degrees you tried
By every scheme thy fancy could contrive
To shake me; for thy greedy ears had from
A recreant's guileful lips already suck'd
Effusive strains of flattery!

“For a time

In doubt I trembled, half bewilder'd, scarce
My senses knowing; but oft and long
That painful anguish bore, days, aye, weeks,
Without a murmur or complaint. Alas!
What woes! how wretched, sad at heart was I!

“Yet still, I then by reason tried to feel
Submission to what fate ordain'd; to feed
My cherish'd grief and cool my frenzy!
Boldly then o'er wave I sail'd, o'er land I
roam'd,
Casting, where'er I went, an ardent glance,

In hope that I another one would find
As fair, but far more true than thou. But all
In vain; I saw no glimpse of prospect bright:
It put my mind in deepest gloom.—Despair
Loom'd up. I thought amid the flood to plunge,
And there yield up my soul unto the God
Who me it gave!

“ But when I sought my couch,
My thoughts on thee would dwell. Thy image,
Like an angel in my dreams, would come
To me with balm my fitful sleep to soothe.
Again with love these visions fired my heart;
Again, with hopes the fairest, at thy feet
I sought thy hand to ease the pain that burn'd
Convulsive in my heart; but yet again
You on my pious suit did frown, and from
Thine eye disdainful drove deep in my soul
The slow, consuming fire of hate. Those smarts
Of thy disdain I felt; the keenest pangs
Of mortal agony endured; despair,

Rage, grief, my bosom rankled; revenge
Stole in upon my thoughts. I then resolved
To strew thy path thro' life with thorns, and
laid
My plans for tny abduction, on the day
Thy father cast me in a prison dark.
May heaven's wrath upon his hoary head
Descend! for I've since then by him been urged
To crimes my sober reason now condemns!

“Now hearken further to my tale:

“When I

Within that dungeon thrown, my fate outside
The prison walls ran rife, and mingled with
The busy tongues of slander's foul-mouth'd crew,
Who on my friends, the buzzing, waspish race
Of thoughtless things did meanly with their
venom
Try to sting the virtuous hearts they could not
Emulate.

“Meanwhile, tho’ lock’d up in a cell,
Yet night and day my hands were rasping of
The clanking shackles which my feet and wrist
Then bound.

“At length, I from my hands them wrench’d.
Again upon my brow the wind of heaven
Freely blew; then to the mountains quick I took
My way, to violate the laws I once
Myself so well observed.

“There, full number’d

By the score, a gang of harden’d men I’ve
Banded for to rob and ruin all who
Cross their path. There, no laws can circum-
scribe

Their freedom, nor can righteousness reclaim :
When first they harken’d to my tale of wrongs,
With execrations loud they swore, in all
Their bitterness of heart, what they’d have done
Had they been me.

“Ha! this makes thee tremble.
’Tis thy turn now to stoop before my power;
For the tortures which you scornfully did
Give to me, I now for you prepare.

“Nay,
Look not now regretful on me, for no
Fervent zeal of thine can stir in my wrong’d heart
One thought of mercy more!

“O thou false promiser
Of love! what pity now expect from him
Whom thou hast wrong’d,—aye, vilely wrong’d,
false one!

Aye, thou who with unyielding soul, my vows
And fond petitions answer’d with disdain!

“But notwithstanding thou thy worst hath done
To injure me, yet still no baseness now
Hath brought me here to do thee wrong; for tho’
A renegade I am, scorn’d by the world
And thee, yet not to kill, but foster life,

My aim hath always been ; so, thine is safe
If I once more do gain the love I crave."

"No ! never, never can I link my fate
With thee !" Morena scream'd.

"'Twas always thus

I found thee full of cynic sneer, thou jade,"
Gandora said. "Thus, once before, you spurn'd
Me from thy hateful gaze, although I loved
Thee then as never man loved woman more.

"So now, thou fickle goddess of deceit!
Tho' grief for him I hate hath warp'd thy heart
And crazed thy brain, thou must to me succumb."

Just then, a sudden bound Gandora gave,
And with his arm the fair one's waist entwin'd.
But thrice her struggles his firm grip relax'd.
"O most abused, most helpless of my kind!"
She cried. "O father, father, where art thou?"

Yet, still unmindful of her tears and cries,
Again the dear, defenceless maid he clutch'd,
And brought her in the gloom of night away
Thro' wild and dreary paths of rocky waste,
And lodg'd her in a stronghold firm, hard by
the sea.



CHAPTER VII.

JUST when the sun down thro' the ambient blue
Of heaven high diffused its morning glow
O'er verdant scenes most wildly grand, within
A rustic temple, Rafael there, half dead,

Sequester'd with the island beauty,
On a rosy couch reclined.

With balm in hand,
She o'er him bent, his soul to cordialize.
"Take this," with sweet, soft voice she said;
 "'twill do
Thee good; it strengthens while it cheers, and from
Oppression's load, the bosom frees."

He then
His eye roll'd up, as if imploring aid,
And with a shuddering motion of his lips,
He drank the nectar'd draught she gave.

Soon it roused
His faint and fluttering pulse from mortal swoon,
And sent thro' each chill limb of his weak frame,
A speedy transport warm and soothing, which
In sleep's mesmeric trance his senses shut
From the external world.

So, while Rafael
Oblivious there in dreamy realms lay,

Admiringly, the island beauty saw
He yet was in the robust time of life,
So handsome, blithe, and fair, all manly grace :
“ A fit companion for a queen,” she said,
“ Of all the sons of men, I’m sure he is
The fairest, aye, no doubt, the noblest of
His race remaining! See how majestic
In distress he looketh, with his life almost
Extinct! Ah, may refreshing dreams attend
Thy slumbers here, secure in peace, dear one
Near me !”

Then down she stoop’d, and from his lips
Inbreathed, in amative caress, soft tones
Fresh from his soul, while oft, meantime, she
there
His raven locks with dalliance coy did braid.

But Rafael soon from sleep awoke, and said,
As he his charming friend observed : “ Art thou
The one who like an angel came and led

Me here just when I thought all help in vain,
All human hope was lost?"

"I am," she said.

With grateful ardor, then, her hand he press'd ;
It to his lips he raised and bless'd the skill
It wrought with sovereign balm within his
frame

That once scarce lived, scarce breathed.

So for that skill

Display'd, he lauded her with praises sweet
She mostly liked to hear. "Oh, what a mind !
How wonderful ! Can goodness in a face
Beam from a warmer heart than thine?"

Meanwhile,

She, like an artful syren, there unveil'd
Her beauties to his wondrous gaze. His heart
To social softness then inclined, for oh !
He felt his bosom touch'd with passion soft,
And, kneeling down, exclaim'd :

“ Oh, stay my heart !

Why beating sigh impassion'd tribute
To her will ? ”

Harmless, then, she smiled and bent
Her ear to catch his breathing tones of love.

“ O Heaven ! hast thou here on earth an angel
Sent to charm my soul and teach me love,—
Or that I might in this fair form divine
Thy beauteous work behold ?

“ With thee I'm charm'd,
Aye, love, and am delighted ; kiss the lips
That gave me hope, when I, forlorn and weak,
And unbefriended, hopeless, pined in exile
On this isle.

“ Yes, thou hast made me captive ;
Thy melting eyes reflect the flame that burns
My heart, and bids me kneel a willing slave
To thee, I fain for life my own would call.”

Then Rafael at her feet swore endless troth,

And said, thro' sighs warm from his heart :

“ O maiden fair, you've charm'd my soul !
thy face

And love hath bound me captive ! Thy votary
Now am I. Ah, yes, thy humblest slave ! Do
With me what thou wilt. I am myself no more !

Then he her lily hand with fervor press'd.
He felt that life was nothing without love ;
With it his soul was gorged ; in conflict sweet
Thro' all his frame it burn'd : love his valor
Conquer'd, his ambitious ardor cool'd.

So,

There, upon the isle which seem'd enchanted,
Rafael, with the island beauty would, 'mid
Glades and flowery plains, oft and again
His passport take to the Elysian ground,
A garden beautified with monthly blooms
Of rose, and crocus golden as the sun
At set of day, with purple cloudlets fring'd.
Then sylvan nymphs from vale and hill, from rock

To rock migrating, came and trip'd the grass
Where blade ne'er droop'd and danced to strains
Of mirthful pipe around that mystic court
Of revelry, where Rafael and his queen
Of love and beauty, all in gold and rich
In gems adorn'd, down by his side did sit.

Amazed, he wonder'd what fantastic show
Before his view, her agency had wrought ;
For they, unlike in form, in feature, mien,
Yet breathed like mortal shapes of heaven born.

“What tiny things are these,” he said, “live
here ?

Are superhuman agencies at work
Upon this isle, attesting hidden things
Of nature to the learnèd world unknown ?
For here reigns one supreme, man's mortal life
To crown with endless scenes of bliss unask'd !
But in the land where I came from no power

Reveals to human eyes the perfect form
Of man wrought by our Maker's hand ; for there,
Man's but a thing of reason, struggling on,
Thro' his short life, to gain a knowledge vast
Of earthly things to give him human power,
Or lead on virtuous paths a blameless life,
So blent is he from birth with error, vice,
And sin. But here, remote upon an isle,
Omnipotence the mystic veil lifts up
And shows to my astonish'd eye, such shapes
With due proportion fair of things that creep,
And walk, and wing, and swim, as are the height
Of all creative thought ! Ah ! nature hath
Strange ways on lands where southern seas
do roll."

So, week in and week out, there Rafael pass'd
Thro' scenes most strange, but yet unvaried still,
Feasting on music, love, and wine ; but soon
With music, wine, and love his appetite

Was gorged, for wine, and love, and music all
Upon his senses pall'd ; for then desire
Had turn'd to loathing what he first so fondly
There admired.

Again, sweet thoughts came crowding
In his mind of fair Morena, dreaming
P'rhaps in groves ambrosial skirting the shore,—
The native shore of him so far away estranged
From her, from parent, friend.

“ Oh, why am I

So foolish here to fondly loiter with
A syren who delights in naught but love,
And who in many ways doth scheme to melt
My resolution to her will, to bind
Me down obedient to her every wish ?
Her I do abhor, detest. All I see is
Vain illusion here, man's outward senses
Mocking. I must free me from her power,
Aye, break the spell the artful jade hath wove,
With cunning skill, to force from out my mind

The object which my soul with sacred ties
Holds dear. Far better die a wretch unknown,
Than link my life with hers.

“So, I’ll bide my time,
To coldly bid adieu to her I dare
Disdain, e’en tho’ I suffer a few days,
Counting the rapid flight of time, until
From passing ship I’m seen forlorn upon
This isle.

“So, moment opportune, roll round
For me to dare the fatal pass, or else
I may for years, from human face, amid
These savage scenes, be barr’d.”

Just then the nymph,
With wreath in hand, to Rafael turn’d, and said :
“Rafael, all is fair, serene. In this place
Love reigns triumphant; here with beauty dwell.
Now raise thy head. The promised hour hath
come

To solemnize our nuptials. Here's the wreath
With which thy future bride now crown ; come, fix
It on my brow."

But Rafael yet remain'd
Disconsolate, with spirits down.

"Why art
Thou sad?" she said; "what doubtful conflict
hast

Thou in thy mind? Come, raise thy downcast eye,
And say 'tis love, fond love that makes thee
pensive."

"You've truly said, 'tis love indeed, Irene,
That makes me sad; but yet no sigh of thine
Need heave thy breast for me!"

"Disdain flash'd in
The quick glance of her eye. "O thou false man
My love you scorn, my beauty rare despise!"
"Nay, well I do thy charms admire; but fair
And comely as thou seemst, yet still my love
Is far away from thee. Morena is

To me dear as the blood that warms my heart :
To her I'm bound by every tie that faith
And honor hold most dear. Her gentle soul
I feel is urging me in thought to change
My course of life in this domain. Ah, yes !
One smile of mine she values more than all
The wealth and love of thy bestowing. Wealth
She values not ; 'tis heart she prizes more ;
For she herself hath been in fortune's lap
Profusive nursed ; hath ample means
For both of us to bask in luxury,
If meanness like a selfish niggard, bade
Me sponge upon her love and opulence."

" O thou false one ! how little hath thou deem'd
My pious love and tender care of thee !
'Tis what I fear'd, my suit would be repell'd
By thee, most hard of heart, of woman's love
Unworthy ! Oh, shame ! Shame's a term too
Mild for thy disgrace ; perfidy is meet !

“So thus thou hast my love with wrong repaid!
I, who saved thee, else thou wouldst have
 sicken’d,
Died, and lain a prey to beasts that prowl
From lairs the isle about!”

 “’Tis true, I vow,
Thee much I owe for that kind act, and would
The debt repay, did fate so place thee in
My stead, and I in thine; but love I can’t
Bestow; honor, truth, forbid: ’twas plighted,
Ere I cross’d the wave, to one as noble
As she’s fair.”

 “Good heaven, how he talks! you love,
Forsooth! thy bosom ne’er hath felt the least
Emotion soft! thine eye the sanctity
Of tears! thy mind no thought to fondly urge
Thee to the hovels of the poor, for vain
Thou art. Thy thoughts are of the world;
Thy boast of fame and trophies won, but sound
As empty as the passing wind.

“Oh, shame
Upon thee, thou capricious man! Begone!
Remorse can't melt thy heart, nor make it feel
Compassion due the slighted soul you've wrong'd!

“Now go, frail man, to woman false! thee I scorn.
Hence, and find thy future days all clouded.
May cureless be thy woes! thy life from joys
Debarr'd! midst revelry, thy heart forget
Its mirthful beat! thy flesh with endless colds
Be chill'd! the flush of health to leave thy cheek!
Thy nights no soft repose, but sleepless toss
On bed of thorns; and when distress'd thou art,
And writhing from thy aches, I hope thy tongue
To speak thy pains will be restrain'd!

“Now hence,
Unto the rock where you I found,” she said,
With hatred fix'd and fierce; “and there repine,
Unpitied, helpless, and unheard—base wretch!”



CHAPTER VIII.

LONELY, past a swift and winding river,
Rolling from the mountains to the sea,
Rafael, from the syren's habitation,
Wander'd sadly when the moon had waned,
The stars grew pale before the dawn of day.

Up bringing from his heart the contrite sigh,
Which frequently upon the wind he pour'd,
He said :

“ Alas! the hours I thought delightful
Were but moments of delusion ; vile arts
Affected, useless, hollow, vain pretense,
That lured my too confiding nature,
And my heart enslaved to love. Oh, error
Past regret! what have I done? whom have I
wrong'd ?

“ To calm my soul, I needs must tell the truth
To her who listen'd to my woes and tales
Of love, when I amid the citron groves
At home would pluck the bud so pure, so fair,—
Sweet emblem of her cheek, that crimson'd oft
When I with tender touch her hand would press
To snatch the stolen kiss,—soft magic power,
That drew my soul from earth to heaven high.”
This said, there voices strange, before unheard,

Arose upon his ears. He paused to cast
A look down in a rocky glen, where fast
A current, rippling, seaward ran.

Then brief,

From where he stood, upon a knoll of rock
Which crop'd its barren head above the vale,
Intent, with hands uplifted to his brow,
Awhile he gazed, and half exultingly,
Then cried : " By all my lucky stars, they're men
Born of the land, but who live on the seas,
Casking water from yon brook ! I'll speed me
Quick along this downward path, and greet them."

But scarce the path he travers'd, ere he came
Upon a score of swarthy seamen eyeing
Him with eager looks in fix'd uncertainty.

" Oh, heaven help us ! who comes here ? " they
cried,

Half in wonder, half in fright.

Then each one
From his girdle drew a sheathing-knife,
And, springing forward, cried aloud: "Stand off!
Who dare intrude?"

"A lonely castaway,"
Rafael replied, "who hath been thrown by stress
Of weather on this isle."

"Ha! ha! that's cool,"
Was their laconic answer. "What know we
Of you? What Christian, civilized, can live
A week amid these dismal solitudes?
You shan't come here until by word of mouth
You tell us who you are, whence from; and be
About it quick, as we must get aboard
Our ship, just under the lee of this land."

Then each to each the space between their voices
Bridged with colloquy, in which our hero
Briefly told them all about his pilgrimage:
How he was wreck'd; how saved; how fared, since

He on conquest bent, to foster freedom
With tried arm and true against his country's foes,
Had quit Sonora's sunny hills so green.

“My eyes!” one cried, “why he's a Mexican!
And Spaniards, bound for Guaymas, are we.
Come, friend, give us your hand. There, brave boy,
You'll do. Come, join our mess. We this eve
The anchor weigh. We haven't much time to
spare.

The sun is low, and will be down the sea
Ere we the vessel with our water reach.”

So, when the moon in her pale beauty rose
Full-orb'd above the sea, upon the tide,
In mist of eve the bark close-haul'd to wind
Ahead, careening on the glitt'ring wave,
Made tacks full three from the mainland,
Then sped away upon the starboard stretch.
Rapidly o'er the deep'ning waters wide.

Stiff was the breeze, and fair abeam; it bulged
Her canvass fore and aft, and forced, at times,
Her prow to dip beneath the heaving wave.

Yet speeding on, ne'er heeding clouds of spray
That from the angry sea flew round, rejoice
Did Rafael's heart. Up from the wave arising,
Each dash of brine was music to his ear.
He knew each plunge she made the distance
shorten'd

To the land where dwelt his pent-up lady-love.
How glad she'd be, he thought, if then she knew
That he was homeward sailing swiftly in
The mellow luster of the moon, or yet,
Perchance, how vex'd her heart would be, if then
She knew that he was to the dear one back
Returning home not quite so pure to her.

These moods in Rafael oft the sailors saw,
And thought, time and again, that in his breast

He harbor'd some fond hope he fain would
breathe,

Or p'rhaps some loss endured, or fame o'erthrown
In evil hour, so much that he with sword
Would ne'er provoke ambition more.

So, in

A month, just when the morn o'er misty space
The veil of night from ocean's bed withdrew,
And the red sun thro' rifted clouds was seen,
A sailor from the mizzen-top cried out :

"Below ! there's land ahead !" With cheers the
crew

The news received, but Rafael hail'd it with
A shriek of joy.

Then casting from the deck
An anxious look, he shortly thro' the haze
Of distant space the darkling headland
Of his native hills descried.

Oh, what transport

Then his bosom fill'd ! How with new life

And bliss ecstatic his rapt heart rebounded!

So, when the vessel, by a calm retarded,
Did at anchor in the offing lay, a boat
Was from its davits lower'd upon the wave,
And pull'd ashore with muscle firm of men
Bronzed with the briny tan of many a sea.

So, then, each with their roving friend shook
hands,

And in their breath rapt, fond adieus commingled,
When they at parting cast adrift, once more,
The yawl, which in the beam of noon soon cut
Across the sea's gray waste away to where
The ship, as if by fate ordain'd to bring
The rover from the isle, in calmness lay.

Rafael, then, gazing awhile on the wave
Rolling in foam from the sea to his feet,
Often there, thought they again and again,
In their blissful commotion, repeated:

“Hail to the wanderer from strange lands across
The seas! Long lost, yet loved Rafael, oh, thanks
To God you’re with us once again!”

So, then,
From off the deep his eye yet darkly bright
He raised and mark’d the day in purpling tints
Fast settling down the western sky. This warn’d
Him not upon the beach to longer tarry,
As was his wont when he an idle youth
From rise of morn till eve closed round the day,
But to the night the breezy ocean leave,
Then dark’ning eastward on his view.

He then
Toward the northern star his visage turn’d,
And there, as on he roam’d the surging strand,
He saw with gladsome eye each old landmark:
The rocks on which in youth his name he carved
Long ere his heart high valor yearn’d; the spot,
Also, where he’d in months gone by embark’d,
And which the parting tear of sorrow from

His love-lorn bosom wrung,—until a bluff,
High ridging to the sea's broad brink, he gain'd.

So there, once more upon his own green hills,
Down Rafael bent and kiss'd his native sod,
Look'd here and there, yet roaming still, and said :

“ Where'er my face I turn, relics sad
Of war's red havoc meet my gaze. Alas !
I fear the despot who hath hither come
To stifle Freedom's voice, is unsubdued
And that the blasting flames of war are still
Unquench'd. Ah, yes ! methinks I hear upon
The sighing gale the groans of dying men,
Who, struggling to maintain their rights, hath
Given nerve and blood in strife, ere they
Would kneel base abject slaves to dupe of kings ;
Bravely spurning all his titles, pomp, and pride,
And giving to the land they love their strength,
Their truth, their faith, their valor and their lives.

“ Oh, how my heart doth yearn to march in line
Of complete files an army firm, well drill'd,
The combat on the field of war to wage,
If yet the bold invading foe hath his
Red flag unfurl'd, till victory thro' these hills
Resounds, and Echo rings the note of joy
That Liberty, dear mistress of our soil,
Was right, and Tyranny, the scourge of blood,
Was wrong !”

 This said, awhile in dumb suspense
He stood to breathe within the shadow span
Of old Don Pedro's mansion. There he gave
A sigh for his fair bride, his heart, his life,
His joy, his dream of youth.

 “ Ah ! how will she,
Poor frighten'd thing,” he sigh'd, “ me greet
this eve ?

Ah, yes ! I feel she'll hail me with the joy
The plains of winter do the flowers of summer ;
The fish the mountain stream ; the leaves

Of morn that open out to drink the ray
Of solar light; and birds with thrilling songs
The dawn. Ah, yes! I'll hasten now inside,
And draw Morena to my heart so glad."

But oh! what tumult there broke on his ear!
All was confusion dire! The father, when
That night of agony Morena shriek'd
For help, amazed from slumber calm awoke,
And breathless starting from his couch, alarm'd,
He wildly gazed with startled eye about
His room, and out beyond in dusky space,
But ne'er a soul he saw.

"What noise was that
Which roused me up from sleep?" he said; "again
Those cries heart-rending, on my ears break!"

Then forth upon his feet he staggering strut,
And rush'd, with limbs convulsed by fear, down
stairs,



Where he, awe-struck, that fatal hour observed
Gandora, thro' the darkness of the night,
His abducted daughter bearing.

“Oh, shame !
Of man's high race !” he cried ; “ what wouldst
Thou with my child ? Oh, rise ! attendants, rise :

Here mischief stalketh round and threatens all
With dire misfortune ! O God ! O God ! what
shall

I do the foulest fiend of hell to stop ?
O righteous Heaven ! burst thy thunder on
His head and hurl him to the fiery depths
Of earth below !

“ Ah ! wretched me, of her
Bereft ! her loss will kill me quite ; e'en now
My life this hour may close ; for what remains
For me but grief, which will, I feel, ere long
Me to the dreary grave consign. O God !
O God ! my child, my life, is from me torn !
Without her all seems blank ! Oh, what is life
Without my daughter dear, my wealth of soul
With patience raised, with fond indulgence rear'd ?
I her dear, fond, doting father watch'd her growth
With jealous care, and taught her mind to read
The chequer'd page of life, that she might learn
The wily schemes and perfidy of man.

But oh, how vain! how futile all my care
And watchfulness of her my fondest hope,
Who would, ere long, my utmost wishes crown
With roving Rafael brave, the warrior whom
She next her God doth love! But he, alas!
From her is wide apart. Oh, if here he were,
I know he'd boldly to her rescue fly!"

"Speak, Don Pedro! speak! what outrage hath
been
Done thy daughter?"

"O Rafael! is that you,
My friend, come back this moment opportune?
Ah, yes! I know thy voice. Oh, hear me speak,
If speak I can, with voice nigh choked with grief!

"A fatal foe, Rafael, with heart to shame
And honor lost, awhile ago came here,
And like a phantom thro' the gloom,
He to his mountain lair Morena drag'd!

Hence, Rafael; go forth and check the wretch's flight.

I have not power enough in these clutch'd hands
To grapple with the monster, for age,
Long since, hath reft me of my youthful strength."

But Rafael silent stood unmoved, with eyes
Upon the floor fix'd in hopeless gaze; for then
Contending doubt and hope his soul oppress'd:
Some snare, he thought, or ruse, perchance, to test
His love.

"Rafael, look up," Don Pedro said.

"Why let fear above thy better sense prevail?
Come, Rafael, stir; let prouder feeling move thee.
Oh, how unlike a soldier brave you stand!
A chief ordain'd by heaven to check the course
Of those who mean our overthrow! Oh! wert
Thou, Rafael, conscious of the poignant pang
Which thy Morena feels, thou wouldst not
Falter thus to seek the foe, but run

With utmost speed my darling child to save !
Courage once I thought was thine, but now,
Alas ! I fear that courage hath thy heart
Forsook !”

Yet Rafael spaketh not, although
The old man’s keen reproach his bosom stung.

Again Don Pedro’s grieving heart gave vent
To words, with intermingling sighs deep fraught :
“ O Rafael ! pardon my unguarded tongue,
Which tauntingly of cowardice unmeet,
Thee hath accused. It was, I vow, the fault
Of my decrepit age and sympathy
For her whose fate lies in thy hands. Therefore,
Forgive what I have said to thee, and rouse
Up from this mood. Oh, stir ! and think of her,
My child ! Let pity move thee for her sake !
To thee her troth was faithful to the last ;
For night and day, her heart, by love of thee
Sustain’d, hath beat as constantly as tides

Do ebb and flow ; her hand and dower await
Thee now."

From doubtful mood these words Rafael
Aroused : awhile he firmly stood. He felt
He had a heart to love, a willing hand
To save from cruelty Morena fair,
And vengeance hurl upon the dastard foe,
Or, failing, share her fate, nor deem his life
Too dearly bought ; then said :

" Don Pedro, tell me
When this dire event occur'd."

" This eve,
Rafael, he came,—the savage brute,—just when
Her sweet refrain of love and constancy
To thee she sung, and when at rest I scarce
Repeated my devotions o'er. In haste,
From 'neath my roof, he drag'd Morena hence
Away, unmindful of her cries and tears,
To some foul den, where she, perchance, will scarce
With bleeding heart her pangs an hour survive."

Then Rafael look'd above and said, "O God!
Have I the perils of the deep survived
To hear my only hope of heaven is lost,
Her, my pledge of faith, my loved Morena!
But I can and will her wrongs avenge:
My mind is now to desperation wrought.
Valor nerves my arm the sword to wield,
And cause the dastard's overthrow—aye! make
The traitor kiss the ground; for heaven bids
Me strike him dead, and God, I'm sure, the deed
Will sanctify."

Then far and near, thro' hill
And dale, the news from lusty throats rang out.
Inured to toil, Sonora's hardy sons,—
Brave youths, all courage, firm and fearless, came
And rallied round the house in dashing style,
To dare the traitor's force, and rescue
The fair captive.

All arm'd, then on thro' wood
And mountain gorge they took their darksome way,

By Rafael led to the dread scene—a place
Of weird and solemn gloom, a chasm wild
And terrible, thro' which a mountain stream
Had there its tortuous passage delved, and rush'd
In gurgling rapids to the sea. A view
More near reveal'd its broad extent, and on
Its lofty brink a tower, half in ruins,—
Gandora's loath'd retreat.

“ This is the place
Where the marauding ruffians refuge find.
But now the time forewarns. Let's wait till morn,
Ere we attempt to force our way in there ;
For if we now in darkness strike the blow,
It may our plans frustrate. Besides, to strike
At dawn will dignify the deed,” said Rafael.

So, near the tower awhile they slept ; no sound
The stillness broke, till faint, yet fainter still,
The stars by dim degrees became, and all
Around them brighter grew ; for then the dawn
Along the sky beam'd forth its friendly light.

Then Rafael gave the word to rise. The men,
Obedient to the call, arose and donn'd
Their arms. In line he them arranged from plans
Of his own skill; then at his word they march'd,
With strength renew'd, in warlike file, and storm'd
The tower, which seem'd impregnable.

Now, quick

Attendant on the dismal din of strife,
Gandora fierce upon the rampart sprang,
And there, indignant frown'd in brutal scorn
From the high summit down on Rafael's men.

"The maiden yield from thralldom vile," Raf. cried,
"Ere we upon thy heads destruction hurl."

But he the chief received the summons with
Disdain, and answer'd back exultingly
That he a braggart's boast unfear'd

At this,

Bold Rafael to his men then turn'd and said :

“My gallant sons, ye know the right. Be firm
And resolute. Now, charge !”

No sooner said,
Than showers of bullets whizzing swiftly flew
Along the smoky air.

But long and fierce
The traitor and his miscreants
Kept Rafael and his valiant men at bay,
Yet less and less the ruffian’s numbers grew;
For when the daring men of Rafael did
Encounter them with volleys swift of lead,
They brought them wounded down to rise no more.

At last a portion of the tower caved in ;
Then shouts of joy from Rafael’s men arose.
He gave, with lithe foot, sure and swift, a bound,
And at their head dash’d on to where the villain
Scowling then in anger stood, and quick with aim
Unerringly of trusty blade, he dealt
With vengeful arm the chief a blow right thro’



His breast, which forced the life-blood from his heart.
When down, Gandora clutch'd the outstretch'd
 hand
That laid him low. A long-drawn sigh he gave,
And hoped that death would grant him some
 reprieve,

So that he could, ere from this earth his life
Forever more deep in oblivion sank,
Awhile atone his headlong course of sin,
And then, with dying breath, spoke out these
words :

“Rafael, to me thou wert a friend, ardent,
Kind, always sincere ; ah, yes! none I knew
Among these hills more noble-hearted.
Oh ! fie upon the cruel war that made
A rogue of me ; for when this land you quit
To fight thy country’s foes upon the sea,
Faithless I to thee became. With perfidy
I tried to win thy heart’s espousal ;
But all in vain. I for my artifice
And pains to gain Morena’s hand and wealth
Received her father’s ire ; this stung my soul :
Earth had no sunlit ray of hope for me.
I felt that I by all the earth was spurn’d,
And thought my only freedom was among

These hills, where I have injured thee and thine.
Oh ! if repentance hath not come too late,
I with my dying breath thy pardon crave."

He then his voice to heaven raised and pray'd
That God, compassionate would look upon
His erring soul ; forgive the sins he'd done
Since he the devil let, in evil hour,
Seduce him from the righteous ways of life.
" Oh, the hour, that fatal hour ! when I from
Virtue fell ! A fool ! a fool ! I was to stray
From paths of righteousness with rogues to dwell !
Unheeding my indulgent parents, who
With tearful eyes forewarn'd and bade me oft
My wayward course of life to shun ! Oh, shame !
I feel it now. 'Twas wrong to raise the sword
Against the land that gave me birth. But I,
O God ! regret that e'er I raised a hand
Against the freest laws yet framed to rule
Mankind. So now thy wrath appease.

O Lord! my life is ebbing fast; the beam
Of day shines not for me. The sky looks black—
My hour is come—I'm sinking down—down—to
death—

All—all—is—d—r—k.”

Then when the chieftain lay
Outstretch'd a lifeless bulk upon the ground,
Rafael slightly felt a touch of grief
Pulsating softly in his heart, and said :
“ Alas ! when man, majestic man, departs
From grace, he doth no glory earn in sin :
’Tis thus the wicked meet their fate ! ”

He then
Took from the chieftain’s vest the keys, and
search’d
With haste along each darksome corridor,
The dingy room for pent Morena sad.

There, she thro’ grated bars that morn look’d out,
With weak eyes worn from want of needful sleep,

Upon the neighb'ring flood.

For she the captive

Lonely, faint, with all her strength nigh spent,
Languidly, like a gleeful bird just caught and
barr'd

In cage from boughs of green and rustling leaf,
Pined in that dingy cell, not knowing what
Would be her fate.

So when the tumult wild

Upon her ears its utmost fury woke,
She raised her head, so sunk in grief, and cried :
“My God ! I heard the clink of clashing steel !
The snap of hostile musket near ! God spare
The brave, and nerve the valiant to be free !”

But brief the fight. Those sounds had come and
gone.

“I wonder where it was ? not far it could
Have been, I'm sure ! Ah ! p'rhaps I dreamt :
all else

But dreamings of rude war forgot; yet, nay,
I do not dream. These hands I touch, the doubt
Gainsay. My eyes, out yonder thro' these bars,
See clouds of battle smoke, yon hills ascending
Like a fog-bank rising from the sea.
I hear the birds their dulcet cadence thrill
In rapt vibrations on the stilly air,
The sound of rippling waters near.

“But hark!

What voice is that which on my ears just fell
In wailings faint, yet wild and weird in tone?
It comes this way! Oh, how with fear I tremble!
Alas! I thought no one would e'er disturb
Me more. Yet still, I feel unconsciously
A strange relief inspiring me with hope.
And why? Because I think I've heard those
Tones before.

“Again that voice! what do I hear?”

“'Tis I, Morena love, my soul's sweet pledge,

That calls thee. Speak; where art thou, love?

Oh, say,

If yet in life?"

"That voice! ah, well I know!

My dread suspense 'tween joy and doubt hath
flown!"

She said.

"'Tis he! oh, yes! 'tis he himself,

My own fond Rafael, calling me by name!"

"Here am I, Rafael, a captive lock'd up

In this cell!"

"Then the key which hath confined you
Love," he answer'd back, "will now release thee
too."

This said, then wide the portals of her prison
Open flew.

A shout of joy burst from

Each throat as they together fondly rush'd,

Embraced, and kiss'd.

Alas! how brief her bliss!
For she, in Rafael's arms, unconscious there,
Quite overcome from joy, soon fainting sank.
Then out he to the noon-day blaze her brought,
And there a tear stood in the eye that look'd
On her loved face so changed.

“Come, darling, speak!
Thy lungs have breath. Look up. No more
complain.
Upon thy face the wind of heaven breathes.
Warm o'er thee shines the sun.”

'Twas then her lips
Began to move with fitful undertones of—
“'Reft of him and kindred—gone—gone. Oh,
where?

Haply great he was to me. He's there!—see!—
He runs to aid distress like mine. To thee,
Rafael, I fly my anguish to impart!”

A pause ensued. Then Rafael said: “How strange

That joy should wound the mind, and pity cause
The heart to bleed !

Awake, Morena love,
Out of thy trance. No longer let thine eye
The cheerful light disdain. Relief to thee
I bring.”

She then her eyes unclosed, and said :

“ Who’s he doth press his cheek to mine ?”

“ ’Tis I,
Morena, breathing comfort in thine ear.
Don’t you know me, love ? Rafael’s near thee now !”

Again he drank the incoherent sighs
Her grateful soul effused.

“ What place is this ?
I feel the sun upon my cheek ! My eyes
Seem blinded with excess of light ! Am I
On earth ? Oh ! can this be my love ? Hath he
Return’d to live and me ?”

“ Wherefore this doubt,

My love? Alone his eyes are on thee fix'd."
Then joy her gladsome bosom moved. She look'd
About the verdant scenes around, then said :

“ I hear

The merry song of birds ! Oh, how serene
The day ! Ah, yes ! in open air I breathe—
Can this be Rafael smiling on me now ? Yes, yes,
’Tis he, indeed, whom I have lost so long !”

Oh, who can count the kisses she upon
His lips imprinted, when with joy she flung
Her arms around his neck and bless’d the wind
Of heaven which so fair and free had blown
Him safely o’er the deep again to her !
How joyful she to think he’d back return’d
In time to make her soul and body free !
How winsome, too, her grateful tongue breathed
 forth,
In words of softest thankfulness, her heart’s
Rapt melody in sweetest phrases strung !

“’Twas hope alone, Rafael, of seeing thee
My darken’d soul sustain’d. From new to wane
Of moons, I pray’d for thy return. Alone,
In meditation wrapt, my fancy would
Into my mind bright visions bring of thee.
And when I’d ramble on the shore, I’d
Look with eager gaze across the briny wave
For thee, my loved, departed mariner;
Thinking each craft that arose on the verge
Of the sea in the day’s golden light,
And the silvery sheen of the evening star,
Was thy swift bark in gayest trim returning.
There, day after day, I would linger,
Hopeful, despairing, alternately glad,
Till the shades of the night came along in
Drab pinions and darken’d the face of the flood.
Then sadly I’d turn my two eyes away
From the swell of the turbulent ocean,
Weeping, the while, with the dews of the twilight,
As homeward I went disappointed again;

For I could not restrain the soft impulse
Of nature from venting its anguish in tears,
When I'd think that I never would more
On this earth my long absent Rafael behold."



CHAPTER IX.

Soon Rafael found himself once more a swain
Amid new pleasing scenes with his fair bride,
Who then alone with him enraptured sat
Never feeling joy more lightly bounding

In her heart so glad. His presence to her cheek,
Ah! once so pale, the healthful color brought,
And o'er her face its former beauty spread;
Her sunken spirits raised; her heart-wounds heal'd:
In brief, but one eternal spring of bliss,
As they sat in the evening's dewy shade,
In both their hearts then flow'd.

“Nay, let thy hand,”

Here Rafael said, “in mine, Morena, linger;
I've three fair claims against thee, love.”

“What are they?”

She replied.

“Thy beauty, heart, and hand.”

“What for?” she said.

“Why, surely, you forget,”

He said, all blithe of tongue of aspect free,
“Thou by me, you know, wert saved. Hence my
reward.”

So with gentlest joy, laughter then inlaid
Her cheeks with blushing dimples. “A kiss,”

She smiling, said, "shall be the only gift
From me. E'en this I should refuse until
I know thy heart's from blot and blemish free;
For when away, mayhap, you did conspire
To break the sacred tie of love from me."

"But once, my dear," he said, "thy image ceased
My heart and fancy to inspire with love
Of thee."

"Ah! then thou hast my plighted love,"
She said, "betray'd. An ill exchange for mine!"

"'Twas but a scheme of pure, romantic fun
I'd with an island princess," Rafael said.

"Alas! how true hath my suspicion been;
'Twas what I fear'd, Rafael, time and again,
Thou wert upon an isle remote, and there
Had pledged unto a maiden, rich but vain,
Thy heart and hand for life. Oh, perfidy!
How couldst thou to thy vows thus prove untrue?"

Then, when he heard her fond complaint, he sat
There mute awhile in doubt, scarce knowing what
To say to quiet Morena's jealous fears;
But brief awhile he thus soliloquized :
" Shall I thus sit and let my silence prove
I'm tarnish'd with the foulest obloquy ?
No, no ; that will not do. I'll tell her all ;
'Twill soothe her heart, now rent with sorest
doubt."

He then began :

" Have done, Morena ; dry
Thy tears. I would not if I could prove
False to thee, whose heart I prize above
All mortal fame. What ! I forget the fair one true
I left behind, the best that God's yet made ?
Not until I sleep eternal 'neath the mound,
Shall I forget thee, love : till then, thy face
And form shall live engraven on my mind.
Now listen, love, and from my lips you'll hear
How much I have thee wrong'd."

But ere a word

He spoke, the father came with reverend step
And slow to where the loving couple sat,
Contesting each their vows of absent love.

“O Rafael! how with joy my heart pulsates,”
Don Pedro said, “to see thee home again!
But the crew, thy hardy crew, where are they?”

Alas! Señor, they’re lost, forever lost!”
Rafael replied.

“God bless us! is that true?”

“’Tis, indeed! Señor.”

“Oh, tell us, Rafael,
Where are they entomb’d? Speak!”

“Alas! Señor,
Their bones lie bleaching on the ocean floor.”

“O God! then you’ve been wreck’d?”

“I have, Señor,
And all but me the raging sea devour’d.”

“Astounding! Oh, calamity most strange!
Oh, tell us all what hath befallen thee!”

Rafael then told of the fight, and his prize,
And where he was wreck'd, and how saved.

“’Tis true!”

Morena cried. “Alas! how true! just what
I said, foresaw, oft fear’d, surmised, his bark
Was wreck’d!”

“Thou hast, indeed!” the father said.
“Don’t stop, Rafael; go on; let’s hear thee thro’.”

“So, when upon the deep the morning dawn’d,
I quit the rock on which thro’ all that night
Of intense gloom I sat disconsolate,
And search’d the isle—a barren, dreary place,
For substance fit to stay my rav’nous greed,
Even on fruit to fare, on berries feed,
But none I found. Alas! what agony
Of mind I then endured! no food, no fire,

No bed, 'mid rocks with summits bleak and bare,
My strength nigh gone, and night above my head!

“ Then cheerless down against a rock I lay,
And thought in my despair of thee, and scenes
Far in the shadow-land beyond this life ;
Which ere the morn's soft hues would on me dawn,
Death, I fear'd, would joyful come, and there
Unveil to me the blissful scenes of heaven.

“ But while I lonely sat there shiv'ring, starved,
Slow hunger's victim, pond'ring o'er my fate,
In vestment white as snow a gracious form,
As if down then from heaven descending there,
In pity near me gazed compassionate
With eye of softest tenderness.

“ At first
I scarce my senses could believe, as hope
Of seeing human kind on that lone isle,
My heart despairing fled. Yet, tho' I saw,

Yet doubting, unbelieving still, half dumb,
Afraid to speak my joy of seeing on
That dreamy isle the faintest trace of man,
She herself, with plaintive voice compassionate,
Breath'd in my ears condoling accents kind :

“ ‘O thou most perfect of majestic man,
In sea-worn garb bedeck'd ! what hath induced
Thy steps from scenes of social life to stray
And pace these pathless tracts of forest drear ?
'Tis but an hour ago thy groans I heard
Commingling with the moaning wind of eve ;
Thy prayers for mercy in affliction's hour.
Arise, poor famish'd wretch ! and come with me ;
I'll bring thee to my own abode, aslant
Yon grot, where I my doors ne'er shut against
A wayworn wretch forlorn. Give me thy hand.'

“ So, when with cheering breath she told me that,
I felt so glad, the woes of my distress
Fled swiftly 'fore soft pity's moving breath.

“ ‘Thou surely art,’ I said, ‘an angel fair
Come hither down from thy high limits, gem’d
With stars; or, p’rhaps, a goodly sprite of earth
Hath in the blast my wailing language heard,
And feeling moved, in hunger’s trying hour,
By pity—cordial sweet of feeling souls—
Hath come to succor me all comfortless.’
Then her I gave my hand; she led the way;
When soon attendant on her steps so lithe,
I found myself a guest at her abode.
There me she food and drink the rarest gave,
A dainty meal so rich it was, I ne’er
Till then enjoy’d a savory morsel more.
This kindness moved my heart to murmur forth
My thanks and hopes that God her gen’rous deed
Would bless. Naught else but thanks my bosom
moved.

“ But scarce had I the food partaken, ere
A spell of mischief she began to cast

Within my mind to bend it to her will.
With dulcet tones of praise and sighs of love,
She tried to charm and triumph o'er my heart.
Awhile I felt the cursed effects infused
My reason blind; then cringing there, I, like
A craven dupe to her feign'd passion knelt.

“ But soon I traced the artful wiles she used
With others' pains, and that she feign'd the woes
They felt by shedding tears when they did weep;
And thus her words, her actions, looks, she shaped
A thousand ways to make me think there dwelt
Affinity of soul between us both.
But as remark'd, she bound me for a time
In her bewitching spells.

“ Yet soon I broke
The charm she wrought to make my heart
accordant
Beat to hers, and draw my love from thee,
From honor, truth, and faith seduce; but no,

Her tricks fantastic I disdain'd. No smile
Bewitchingly of hers, however shaped,
Nor lyric notes from her impassion'd tongue,
Nor bribes of wealth, could bend me to her will.
In vain her songs, her smiles, her bribes, did prove
To lure me from thy blameless self, to whom
My thoughts full oft on that strange coast, would
there,
On fancy's wings to thee, Morena, fly."

This said, Morena's face a pleasing look
Assumed. She could no longer doubt his word;
For joy at hearing all was fair and good
Her doubts repress'd, and there, delighted, hung
Upon his arm.

So then, with thankful heart,
Don Pedro said:

"I've mark'd, Rafael, thy force
Of mind. A head and heart like thine, so good
And just, are seldom found. To thee, my friend,

Be granted length of days. Give me thy hand.
Now let our happy greeting give new birth
To joy, and blissful thoughts the future shape.
No more thy hand need wield the sword; our land
Is now from stormy battle freed. We've triumph'd
O'er the foe, and all the glory won.
So here's the fairest trophy I can give
To one defender of our native land.
My daughter's hand is thine,—fit recompense,
I hope, Rafael, for thy unswerving skill:
But yet thy country owes thee more."

"No more,

Señor. Morena's heart—a priceless boon—
Is due requital fair of all I crave,"
Brave Rafael, bowing said.

"Soon, then," the Don
Replied, "thy nuptials shall be solemnized."

So, in a few days, at the hour of noon,
Before the altar, hand in hand, among

A group of friends, the bride and bridegroom stood.
Each heart with fond emotion panting :
Each mind the blissful future reading.

Then the priest approach'd the happy twain, and
said :

“ Rafael, wilt thou make the bride thy lawful
wife ? ”

“ My lawful wife ! Nay,” Rafael, smiling, said,
Kissing her meantime ; “ ask me if I could
Refuse the soul whom I’ve adored at home,
Revered in absence with affection true.”

“ ’Tis well. Let each, then, in the future feel
An equal share of joy and grief.” So, then,
He joined their hands in wedlock holy.

“ Thou
From this hour,” he said, “ art man and wife ;
Go and love each other, heart and soul.
Enjoy in future all the bliss kind heaven
May bestow.”

“ And may ye thro’ this ample sphere,”
The father said, “ where’er thou art, at home,
Or far away in distant climes, dispense
New luster on thy names. May beauties rare
In nuptial bliss from out thy loving souls
Awaken into birth,—fair rosy youth,—
To crown thy age and cares with joy, till ye
Be summon’d late in life to dwell above
In heaven eternal.”

DAISY SWAIN,



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The story of Daisy Swain most vividly and truthfully portrays the incidents in the life of a young maiden, who, from the day of her birth to her sixteenth summer, bloomed as fresh and pure as a rose in her childhood's home in the Shenandoah Valley, where her contented father lived in peace. It tells of her pious mother who cradled her infant form. It depicts the fanatic and the demagogue, and describes how freemen were made foes, stating how they fought, bled, and died, mingling their blood upon the gory field. It paints in glowing terms the youthful volunteer ; how his soldier heart beat high with pride at the sound of martial drum and fife ; and why he left his Northern home, the spot where his ancestors slept, and in his youth and strength how he bore, amid the roar of cannon on the battle-field, the flag of freedom through the thickest of the fight. It details his thoughts of home and distant friends, as he, wounded, lay upon the margin of a stream, bleeding out his patriot blood and musing in the despair of death. It tells how Daisy, fair and tender, came like an angel clothed in white, and found him in the twilight by the rivulet, all helpless and dying, wrapt up in the riven standard which he'd borne through blood and fire. It describes how the light of heaven in her face, so fine in beauty, cheered him, and how beside his sick couch she ministered to his pains. It tells of the hopes she cherished in her young heart's love for him ; and how those blissful hopes on earth were blighted in her bloom when her soul was in its pride of freshness ; and of her faith and tears ; her wailings and weary watchings, after a gang of bold guerrillas, who, in their despotic pride, came to her peaceful home

and with their traitor hands conveyed her lover and her father far away. It states how she was made an orphan, and how within her desolate home, during many hours of solitude, she would mourn her lover dead. It narrates the trials and hardships she endured ; how in her adversity she never faltered, while searching for her lover, who had escaped from his vile prison, and was then once more fighting the battles of his country ; setting forth how strangely they met, and how upon the battle-plain her lover fell ; but not until he had with strength of valiant arm and Union bullet killed the bold guerrilla chief who no mercy showed the innocent, whose agony could wring no tear of pity from out his callous heart. Finally recounting how Daisy and her patriot lover, enshrined in death upon the battle-field, sleep the peaceful sleep that knows no waking.

No tongue has spoken nor pen recorded a patriotic story so touching in its incidents which from the beginning never flags an instant, but holds the reader spell-bound to the end.

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One reads the poem from beginning to end with a feeling of satisfaction, and seems to have traveled through the val-

ley of the Shenandoah—the scene of the story—without fatigue. The tone of the poem is elevated, and its sentiments thoroughly loyal. We unhesitatingly commend it.—*Quarterly Journal, Vt.*

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In moldy dungeon vilely smeared

With damps infectious.

[*N. Y. Day-Book.*]

The author of “Daisy Swain” has shown in his lines so forcible, musical, and clear, that he possesses all the human moods, the very qualities of heart and soul, of the true poet. Nothing in the work is stilted. His thoughts spring spontaneously from the subject, and his verse is unaffected, and free from the restraints of mechanical mannerism on which so many poets solely rely for their reputation. For lifelike portraitures of character, for force, rugged grandeur, sweet and elegant expressions of language ; for depth of thought, invention, soul-stirring events, and absorbing pathos, appealing to the loyalty of her sons and the virtue of her daughters, nothing has reached us from America equal to it. Columbia may well feel proud of the author of this extraordinary poem. We shall look forward with considerable pleasure for any fresh installments of verse from the gifted author of “Daisy Swain.”—*English paper.*





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